

# The Courier

courier.news@ncl.ac.uk

## FREE KING

Use this coupon to claim your second Whopper absolutely free!!!  
100% pure beef flame-grilled Whopper served with ketchup in a  
sesame seed bun... and on special offer for a limited period only!  
Valid only at 24 Northumberland Street,  
and 100 Clayton Street, Newcastle.  
Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer

No. 1069

Monday 17 February 2003

FREE

INSIDE



## MUSIC MADNESS

Interviews of Ed Harcourt and the Polyphonic Spree in the 3 page music section

## LAUGHS

An insight into Newcastle's comedy circuit in the Arts section.

TODAY

www.sumarketing.com



Student Media Buyers  
0845 1300 667

Media Careers Day on Wednesday in Kings Hall

# CHILD ABUSE SHOCKER HITS NORTHUMBRIA

## Fighting Against The War



THIS STUNNING photograph of Jorman Kwong was taken at last December's march in London against tuition fees.

Students were marching again last Saturday - in record numbers - against the proposed War on Iraq.

## Lecturer to be SACKED after making false child abuse allegations

By DAVE KNEALE

**UNISON MEMBERS are preparing to call for a Northumbria University professor to be sacked for leading a shambolic investigation which falsely accused two local carers of child abuse.**

Professor Richard Barker, head of Child and Family Studies at Northumbria, led a team of four investigators who wrote a report on behalf of Newcastle City Council which falsely accused nursery workers Dawn Reed and Christopher Lillie of abuse. The four were paid £360,000 between them for the report, however it was discredited in the six-month libel case that followed. Mr

Justice Eady's ruling slammed the report as 'malicious', containing 'fundamental claims which they must have known to be untrue.' Ms Reed and Mr Lillie were exonerated of all charges and each received £200,000 in compensation for their ordeal.

Unison, one of the largest unions in the country, is likely to take up this matter and call for Professor Barker's resignation. Unison shop steward Phil Capon is insistent that the matter must not be swept under the carpet, and he is confident of their support when he presents a case to the Newcastle branch of Unison next month. He feels that the aspersions cast by the report hang over many Unison members unfairly, and that Professor Barker should be called to account. He told The Courier:

"My major concern is that his department cannot be objective about what happened and the lessons to be learned from it when the head of that department is so clearly implicated. I think the department's position is compromised by his continued presence within it."

Northumbria University declined to comment at this stage, however it did confirm that an internal investigation will take place within the university.

Mr Capon, however, remains convinced that conflicts of interest could hamper any investigation.

"It seems to me that people in powerful positions can avoid accountability even in such extreme circumstances, where people were falsely accused of such serious offences."

The voice of Newcastle Students since 1948

## The Courier

Union Society  
King's Walk  
Newcastle  
NE1 8QB

Telephone: 0191 232 4050  
Fax: 0191 239 3991  
E-mail: courier.news@ncl.ac.uk

Find us on the ground floor of the  
Students Union building, opposite  
the Cochrane Bar



EDITOR:  
**Jake Lee**

Editor.Union@ncl.ac.uk



DEPUTY EDITOR:  
**Jennie Lawrence**

J.A.Lawrence@ncl.ac.uk



NEWS EDITOR:  
**James Garbett**

J.A.Garbett@ncl.ac.uk



ARTS EDITOR:  
**Jess Gooch**

J.S.Gooch@ncl.ac.uk



MUSIC EDITOR:  
**Al Smith**

courier.news@ncl.ac.uk



BOOKS EDITOR  
**Paul Crosthwaite**

P.J.Crosthwaite@ncl.ac.uk



SPORTS EDITOR:  
**Geraldine Mole**

Geraldine.Mole@ncl.ac.uk



FASHION EDITORS  
**Polly Sweet &  
Rose Wilson**



TRAVEL EDITOR:  
**Fran Naish**

Francesca.Naish@ncl.ac.uk

Contact the individual section Editor to confirm  
the time and location of each week's meeting.

Advertising:  
**OWEN PARRY**

Courier.Marketing@ncl.ac.uk

Printed by:  
South West Wales Publications Ltd  
Adelaide Street  
Swansea  
SA1 1QT Tel: 01792 510000

# STUDENTS BETTER OFF BANKRUPT

## Loophole in law could let off student debt

By ROSS HAYDOCK

**NEWCASTLE STUDENTS are beginning to look for alternatives to paying off their student loans. The extra £2000 in top-fees Education Secretary Charles Clarke has proposed has got students thinking as to how to avoid them.**

Although they will only have to pay after graduation this will still create extra pressure on students who already graduate with several thousand pounds of debt. Previously, faking death or exile seemed the only feasible options to avoid paying back the dreaded loan but there is now a slightly less drastic solution. Simply

by declaring yourself bankrupt, which really only amounts to filling in a form at an office of the Official Receiver, you may be able to avoid ever paying your student loans back. The forthcoming Enterprise Act will create a loophole which will enable some bankruptcies to be quickly discharged within a year. Although the law is mostly aimed at entrepreneurs, it may have an effect on students too.

The logical, but probably unlikely, progression of this is that filing bankruptcy will become a rite of passage, like graduation, causing Labour's system of tuition fees to collapse.

Louise Needham, the Union Society's Communications Officer, was unsure whether this was a good step to take, "We wouldn't encourage students to do it, because bankruptcy still carries a certain

stigma with it in our culture. We don't really know enough about the consequences at this stage." However she did go on to add: "The more people that become bankrupt, the less the stigma will become". Although every student in Britain declaring his or herself bankrupt at the same time seems like an option, bankruptcy can adversely affect your career and credit rating, so maybe second thoughts are in order.

As the University Press Office put it, "it may not be the easy road it appears to be".

Unfortunately, the Department for Education and Skills seems set to shut the loophole and change the law so that student loans won't be cancelled by bankruptcy anyway. Still, it was a nice dream while it lasted.

# Patten wants job

## Newcastle Chancellor admits he wants Oxford Chancellorship too

By TIM MAYNARD

**CHRIS PATTEN has thrown his hat into the ring for the prestigious prize of Chancellorship at Oxford University. Following recent speculation linking Newcastle University's Chancellor's Chris Patten with the equivalent vacant post at Oxford, Mr Patten has since positively expressed his interest in the role.**

While on a visit to the city, Mr Patten was asked by reporters from the student newspaper "Cherwell" about the position. The paper reports him saying that he would stand "if I thought that there was a lot of general support, and that I had a chance of winning". His office have since confirmed these remarks, but point out that Mr Patten has had no formal approach and his only connection has been speculation in the newspapers. However, Mr Patten has since consulted Newcastle's Council about his possible candidature.

At present it appears unlikely that if Mr Patten's candidature at Oxford were to be successful, he would relinquish his role at Newcastle. The vice-chancellor, Christopher Edwards, has previously indicated that there is no problem in principle of Mr Patten holding both positions, and this was endorsed by the Chairman of the Council at Newcastle University, Olivia Grant, when she revealed that the Council had given Mr Patten's proposed candidature their 'full support': "Mr Patten advised us that he would be happy to retain the Chancellorship of Newcastle. The Council discussed these matters at length and concluded there would be no conflict of interest if Mr Patten were to have an additional role at Oxford". Ms Grant added that the arrangement "would be of benefit to the higher education sector generally".

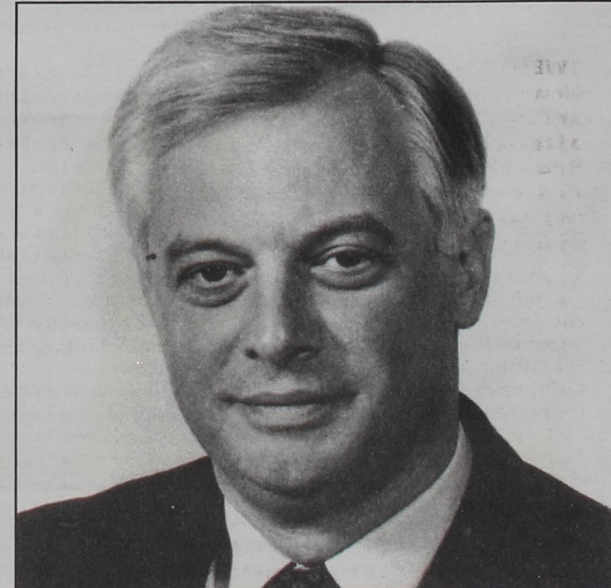
Meanwhile Mr Patten told the Council that he has become "increasingly interested" in university issues as a result of his role in the north-east, "and would like to expand his remit in this respect in the future". Ms Grant also stated that Mr Patten "has been an excellent

ambassador for Newcastle University and has provided us with enormous help and support since he became Chancellor in 1999".

Two other contenders have recently all but ruled themselves out of the post, which became vacant following the death of Lord Jenkins earlier this year. Former US president Bill Clinton has

indicated that he is busy setting up his foundation, while former education secretary Shirley Williams has said she will not stand, in protest at the government's planned top-up fees. This therefore promotes Mr Patten's claim to an all the more credible one.

Nominations have to be in by February 25th, and elections take place on March 14-15.



The Courier is the independent newspaper of the Union Society at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Established in 1948, The Courier is published weekly during term time.

The design, text, photographs and graphics are copyright of the Courier and the individual contributors. No part of this newspaper may be reproduced without prior permission of the Editor.

# The Baltic wants you NAKED

Top Artist needs  
240 people for  
latest sculpture

By CHERYL CAIRA

**ANTONY GORMLEY, designer of the much acclaimed Angel of the North, is asking for volunteers willing to pose naked for his new project.**

The installation, named "Domain Field", is set to be displayed at BALTIC, the new International Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead.

It will take up 800 square metres of floor space, and will include around 240

sculptures. Gormley has asked for volunteers from the Newcastle - Gateshead area, aged between 5 and 95, to come along and have their bodies immortalised in plaster. Each person will be asked to stand fully unclothed, while a plaster mould of their body is made.

The moulds will then be converted into Domain - sculptures made of stainless steel bars. The end result, in relation to the title of the exhibit, should create the atmosphere of a field of energy, filled with "a sparkling myriad of stainless steel elements". Visitors will

be able to walk through the concrete maze of "Allotment", an art work produced by Gormley 5 years ago consisting of 300 different rooms, or explore the cloud of metal sculptures of 'Domain Field'.

The response so far is reported to have been excellent, with over 900 people having shown interest in participating in the project. The final 240 people chosen to take part will be selected so that the finished sculptures represent a cross-section of the population of the Newcastle area.

Isabel King, Project Co-

ordinator of 'Domain Field', commented: "The project has been an incredible success so far. Antony loves working with people in the Newcastle - Gateshead area and is thrilled that there has been such an excellent response."

Those interested in viewing the different stages of the project can go to the BALTIC from Monday 17th February onwards, where around 6-8 plaster casts will be made per day for about a month, and then welded to create the finished art work, which will officially open on the 17th May.

## £10,000 to be spent on VIZ safety cartoon

By CHRISTOPHER YOUNG

**THE UNION is set to participate in a civil awareness programme which will be orchestrated by a designer from top comic Viz.**

Together with Northumbria Union and the City Council, the Union will begin this campaign in May after receiving £10,000 from a government project called 'Students in their Communities.'

The program hopes to inform students of civic issues such as guarding against burglars and keeping the noise down for the benefit of the neighbours.

It will consist of posters, internet games, but most importantly comic strips, right here in 'The Courier.'

Laura Holbeck, the University Welfare Officer, said "We had been in talks with the police about how we could brand the important message of civil awareness. It was of interest to the Council, the universities, and the police to get this message across."

"Steve Donald (Viz designer) showed us his work and it was exactly the sort of thing that we were looking for. Viz originates from the area and is popular with students."

The campaign will also be split between the Council and Northumbria Union, but Newcastle Union will provide the primary focus, as it will have its own publication in 'The Courier'.

This collaboration is set to own the copyright for the newly designed characters, and will have input into Steve's designs. These designs will be used in the web games, which will consist of stopping burglars entering a house - obviously Playstation quality gameplay!

Laura added that "A lot of money has been spent on tackling this issue in this city, and we're trying to choose a way which we will think will be effective."

"With 40,000 students in Newcastle there is a definitely a need for students to be aware of these civic issues and we hope we can put them across in a fun and enjoyable way."

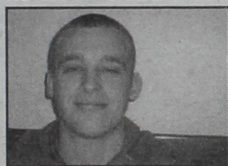
We decided to ask some students whether they would get their kit off for 'artistic purposes.'

SALLY WILLIAMS



"I did the naked calendar, so yeah; I'd have no problem with doing it."

ADAM WORLEY



"I did consider doing the naked calendar but I don't think I would do this, not sure I want to see a naked mould of myself!"

DAVID DICKSON



"I would do it because he's such a well known artist and the project is really different. I think it'd be cool to have your body represented in sculpture."

ANDREW PARKINSON



"No, because I don't fancy the idea of being covered in plaster."

## Rowers triumph in race against North Sea passenger ferry

By KATIE ARCHER  
and ADELE ROBINSON

**TWENTY INTREPID rowers from Newcastle University Boat Club are celebrating a unique victory after challenging the DFDS Seaways ship, the Prince of Scandinavia, to a race across the North Sea from Newcastle to IJmuiden, Amsterdam.**

The rowers, working in two teams of ten, captained by Steve Doble, completed the 492km voyage 18 minutes and 57 seconds ahead of the ship after a marathon 16 hour row through the night, using twin ergo machines aboard the passenger cruise ferry.

Boat Club Sponsorship Officer, Gill Harris, who organised the event, nicknamed Operation Amsterdam, and who also acted as cox for one of the teams said, "At one stage we were only 1,500 metres ahead of the ship, and it looked like touch and go as to whether we were going to be able to do it. We didn't realise how hard it would be to keep going right through the night, and when we were nearing the finish it was quite tense, but really exciting at the same time."

The exhausted but ecstatic rowers arrived in Amsterdam at 10.00am on

Saturday 14th December, 2002, after having rowed non-stop from 5.30pm the previous evening, when the ship left Newcastle. Throughout the challenge, they kept their energy levels up by eating pasta and drinking energy drinks and were also sustained by the support and encouragement from a full ship of fellow passengers.

The principal aim of the challenge was to raise the profile of the Boat Club to help obtain the sponsorship needed to engage the services of a full-time coach, enabling them to build on their strengths and compete at the highest level nationally. They set themselves a target of raising £3,000 from this

challenge and actually managed to raise over £3,000 of which a donation of 40% has been made to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

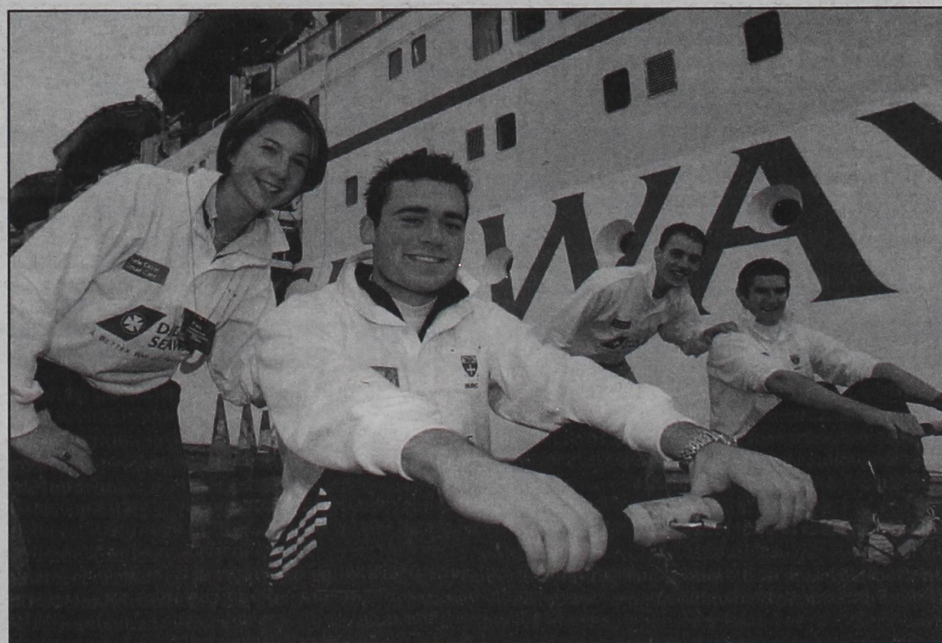
Currently the Senior Men's Elite VIII holds the Bronze Medal in the British University Championships and has a long and successful tradition of holding a place among the cream of British University rowing.

Past events have included a 100,000 metre row in the centre of Northumberland Street in Newcastle which raised £2,600, again for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Future fund raising events are currently in the balance, however we are obliged to keep these outrageous plans

undisclosed for the time being.

We wish them every success and look forward to reporting their future successes.



ROWERS... on board the ferry

# PROTESTS ON ANGEL

## Pro-hunt campaigners join the protesting season

By JEROME STARKEY

**A FACTION of the pro-hunting lobby staged a spectacular protest at the Angel of the North on Thursday, by draping the words "love hunting" from the sculpture's wings.**

Two professional riggers scaled the 65ft structure before dawn and raised two giant red banners bearing their message. They were helped by more than eighty people, including a number of Newcastle students, who had turned out to show their support.

The words "Love Hunting Join Our War" were hung from the front of the sculpture which looks south. In smaller letters on its back was the message, "Love You Too Gateshead."

The peaceful demonstration, organised by the Real Countryside Alliance, was in opposition to the Government's plans to outlaw hunting, which are currently going through parliament.

The Real Countryside Alliance is an informal splinter group of the Countryside Alliance.

Edward Duke, formerly a high-ranking member of the Countryside Alliance, and organiser of Thursday's demonstration described the morning as a great success.

He said he was campaigning so that young people, like those at Newcastle University, would be able

to enjoy the same country pursuits as his generation.

"We ask people to be tolerant of our way of life," Mr Duke said, "But if they don't like hunting they are free to disagree."

However, some newspaper reports described the demonstration as irresponsible because it risked distracting drivers.

The police arrived before the banner was in place but agreed not to make any arrests on the condition that the protestors took the banners down once the press had taken their photographs.

The banners, each over 40 metres long, were in place for just less than an hour. However, during that time traffic began to back-up the on A1 as commuters slowed to take a look.

Some drivers hooted in support as

they drove past, but others called the police to complain.

The affectionate message on the banners was timed so that press coverage would coincide with Valentine's Day.

The banners took fifty people eight weeks to make and the whole operation took four months to plan.

At one point it looked as though the plan might fail when wind filled the banners, which acted like sails, while the volunteers struggled to hoist them into place. The process of raising the banners took longer than expected.

The banners snagged on the structure of the sculpture, and ripped in some places, but the riggers, who remained on the Angel while the banners were up, managed to work it into place.



# Media wannabes wanted

By COURIER NEWS STAFF

**CULT WEATHER presenter Bob Johnson will be special guest at the Media Careers Day this Wednesday at Newcastle Uni.**

Normally, careers fairs aren't much to shout about, but when every student appears to want to work in the media and the likes of the BBC, Tyne Tees Television and Border TV are actively recruiting and informing students of opportunities, then you know that this is something different.

For students who fancy themselves as the next Zoe Ball, Jamie Theakston or Jon Snow then this might

be the opportunity they've been looking for. Future journalists, researchers, producers and presenters are welcomed, as is anybody interested in learning more about the media. There will be the chance to interview local celebrities, make valuable contacts and gain a unique insight into this competitive industry.

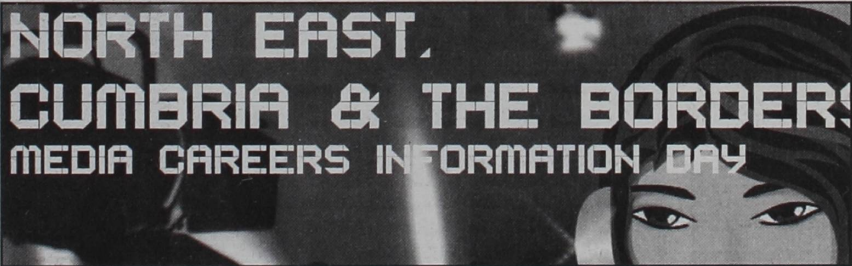
25 representative organisations from across the industry will be

exhibiting in the King's Hall (Newcastle Uni). Advisory bodies, education providers, independent production and post-production companies and national groups will provide visitors with a great opportunity to talk directly to people working within the media.

After the success 3 years ago, when the Media Fair last visited Newcastle, there will be a series of 30-45 minute presentations in a

panel format where professionals from different areas of the media will share their expertise on working in the industry and how to gain important work experience.

Events are taking place all over campus on the day, including the Ballroom and King's Hall. Tickets, £3, on sale at the Careers Service or on the Ents desk Mon-Fri 12-2pm in the Student Union.



# Police appeal for witness

**ON THURSDAY 6/2/03 at about 08:45 - 09:00 hrs a 10 year old boy was assaulted in the area of Harrison Place and Sandyford Road, Newcastle. The offender ran off towards Sandyford Road.**

The boy then spoke to a male on Sandyford Road after the attack. He used this male's mobile phone to ring

his mother.

It is urgently required that this male passer-by is traced as he may have vital evidence for the investigation.

It is believed he may have been a student.

Please contact Newcastle East command CID on 0191 2146555 on extension's 62245 or 62248 with any



# We're Not Alone...

By Tim Maynard.

## Exeter

**Exeter University's netball team have set about raising funds for their tour to South Africa this summer by going topless for a calendar.**

The first-team shooter said: "the photographer was embarrassed because he was getting a bit of an eyeful. But once we relaxed, he relaxed as well". I bet. Going topless for a calendar is, of course, nothing new to Newcastle students, and the appropriately entitled Exeter student paper 'Expose' initially ran the story but the lasses have clearly taken the idea a step further when the national newspaper which publicises their, er, sporting prowess is taken into consideration: none other than the highly reputable "Daily Sport". Excellent work, girls, excellent work.

## Durham

**The editor of Durham's uni paper 'Palatinate' is clearly close to giving up hope with students at the oh-so-exciting city.**

He feels more should have participated in the recent top-up fees protest, instead, he claims, they went shopping: "Most students like shopping. Most students like shopping in London even more". For most students from Durham this may be undeniable, but most students from Newcastle have no problem with the Metro Centre. The editor continues: "The absence of students from Durham can only fuel the appalling stereotypes that the vast majority can in fact afford not to care about these issues". Appalling, yes, but sadly true.

## Birmingham

**It's all very well having a letters page in these student papers. But what generally makes such an idea a success is, well, a quantity of letters, as experienced by Birmingham's 'Redbrick'.**

Imagine the editor's despair upon the realisation that he had not one letter to print. "What's going on?" he cries, "Are we doing nothing wrong, or everything wrong?" Best not to answer that one really.

## Oxford

**Meanwhile 'Oxford Student' reports the uni's chief purchasing officer stole £31,065 from the uni to fund her own shopping addiction.**

Patricia Whitehead has already repaid the cost, and £1,000 court costs. "She is no longer employed by the university" and has been "advised to seek psychiatric help". That could be the sensible way forward, certainly.

# Troops descend on British airports

## Parr's Snips

The week in 400 words



Chris  
Parr

**W**hat a week to be in England. Airports on high alert, military troops engulfing Heathrow and, worst of all, we can't even beat the Australians at football.

Indeed, Britain seems to be fast-

abandoning its sporting obsession and becoming captivated by, believe it or not, the world of politics. With half a million anti-war protestors due to hit London, and the cricket team abandoning their game with Zimbabwe (be it for safety or political reasons), could the age of apathy be quickly in demise? Alas, perhaps we just don't want to risk yet another cricketing defeat - I dare say we already have our fair share of those booked over the coming week. However, we do play the Aussies in the World Cup, and if they can beat us at football then maybe, just maybe...

Unfortunately, such hopes seem about as likely to result in success as the attempts to locate our old friend Mr Bin Laden. Having said that, this week has seen two new audio cassette releases from Osama himself, marking a return to form in the Saudi Arabian's illustrious recording career. As fears of a "UK September the 11<sup>th</sup>" appear to be running at an all time high, the voice of Bin Laden has sent a wave of alarm through the country. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic seem intent on proving a link between the Iraqi regime and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, and

with one tape urging the Muslim world to unite behind Iraq, and another outlining his belief that this year will see him sacrifice himself in an act of martyrdom against his enemies, Bush and Blair believe the ties between Saddam and Osama are too great to ignore. Suspiciously, there was no video to accompany the recordings so scepticism remains high, despite the assurance from many people close to Osama that the voice is most definitely his.

Of course, there is the possibility that the voice could be that of an actor. With 'Oscar fever' encompassing Hollywood, the best people for the job would appear to be veteran performers Jack Nicholson and Michael Cain, with both men chalking up 'best actor' nominations. As well as Sir Michael, British interests are well represented at the awards, with The Lord of the Rings and About a Boy up for awards, not to mention Catherine Zeta Jones and Daniel Day-Lewis for best supporting actress and best actor respectively. Perhaps our beleaguered football fans will turn out to cheer them on - after all, we have no chance against Liechtenstein.

## Bec Says the shipping forecast is cool

**'A**nd now time for the shipping forecast issued by the Met. Office at 0045'. Those words thrill me. I ask often myself why....

'Cyclonic in German Bight at first, variable 3 or 4, mainly good, with coastal fog patches.'

The shipping forecast is a national treasure. It could only be British. Such an extraordinary but dependable way of delivering weather reports to ships.

'Silly, Rockall, West Dogger, Fisher'. Is this guy for real? It tickles me that some people actually understand what he is saying. To me it is an incomprehensible, but truly magnificent and intriguing phenomenon.

I've not always felt this way. I used to hate it because it reminded me of childhood days tossing around on a boat, feeling seasick and absolutely hating the announcer who was informing my engrossed Dad that 'Finisterre' was 'one thousand and twenty eight, slowly rising'.

But now, as I get older and appreciate the funny little consistencies in life, my attitude has changed. I think it is the coolest, most captivating thing I have ever heard on the radio. It's my favourite lullaby; I can't go to sleep without it.

The list of strange and quirky names is like poetry. With my eyes closed I go on a trip around the British Isles, imagining the sailors out at sea, lives depending on the dulcet tones of this man who I think I might be in love with.

When I was leaving for my year abroad in Mexico last year, I had to be talked out of packing dozens of tapes with recordings of the shipping forecast. Luckily, you can get it on the internet nowadays.



A NIGHT IN WITH THE  
WIRELESS !!

# What the White Paper means to Newcastle

**£3000 top-up fees, a 50% participation rate and elite 6\* research groups. The Head of the Uni spells out exactly what the radical Government changes are and how they'll affect us.**



Christopher  
Edwards

The Vice-Chancellor writes ...

**T**he publication of the long-awaited White Paper on Higher Education is an important event and its implications will have very significant effects on this university. Not surprisingly, most of the press coverage has been on "top-up fees". This has attracted attention away from other key issues.

On teaching, the Government is committed to its 50% participation rate in Higher Education by 2010, but the

expansion will be mainly by increasing the number of students taking two-year foundation degrees, rather than honours degrees. This will affect our Business Plan which had anticipated significant student expansion. However, we have recently learnt that HEFCE has agreed the majority of our current bid for Additional Student Numbers which will off-set this loss.

The White Paper's research recommendations are potentially more worrying. It is likely that they will greatly benefit the Golden Triangle of Oxford, Cambridge, and London in that the

Government wants to create a new cadre of very large 6\* research groups. It is likely that this will be funded by not financing areas graded 4 and below. Despite Newcastle's success in the last Research Assessment Exercise, becoming a median 5 research university, we would lose about £5m per annum and HEFCE research funding for many subject areas would go. This could have serious effects on staff morale and, hence, retention.

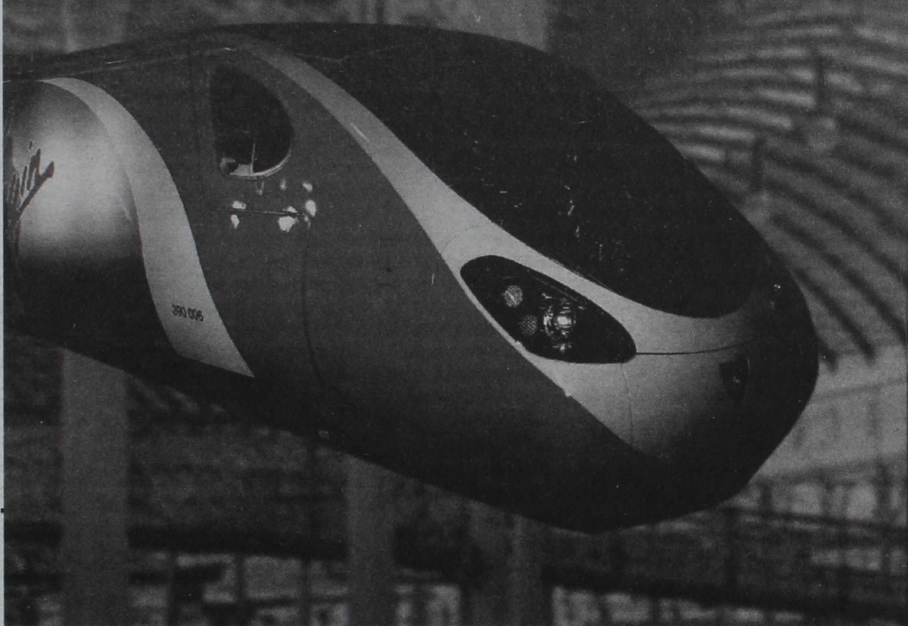
The fees issue is far from resolved. I suspect that many MPs will be implacably opposed to both the fee increase and the fact that variable fees could produce a multi-tiered system. However, for many universities the compelling financial need will force them to charge higher fees. This will only be allowed if they meet the requirements of the Access Regulator. This university has been praised for its PARTNERS Programme for widening access. However, I fear that the Government will move towards quotas of students from state schools, with all the major problems associated with affirmative action. This may be one of a few areas where the UK Government might not wish to follow America's lead.

## Young Persons RAILCARD

16-25? A young persons railcard can save you 1/3 on your fares and costs £18 for a whole year.

For your chance to win one of five railcards, just e-mail your postal address to [courier.marketing@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:courier.marketing@ncl.ac.uk).

For more information about picking up a railcard, visit your local staffed train station or call 0845 7 48 49 50 now.

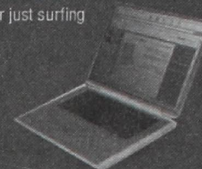
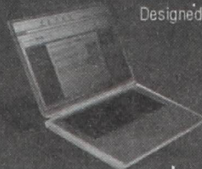


[studenttech.co.uk](http://studenttech.co.uk)

giving you a better deal

Want a computer but put off by the inflated prices?

Designed for students - Word processing, games or just surfing



Laptops & PCs from under £350

DELL

IBM

£5 DONATION TO THE CHARITY OF YOUR CHOICE WITH EVERY LAPTOP PURCHASED

CALL STUDENT TECH - (01443) 225793

## Summer Camp jobs in the USA

BUNAC's Summer Camp USA programme offers you:

- The chance to work on a children's summer camp
- Salary, accommodation and food at camp
- Time to explore the whole of North America.

If you are interested and are available from early June to mid-August, aged between 18 and 25, and have experience of working with kids, visit the BUNAC website for more information to reserve your place at the next interview session coming up in:

NEWCASTLE Tel: 020 7251 3472

[www.bunac.org](http://www.bunac.org)

BUNAC  
SUMMER CAMP USA

BUNAC, 16 Bowling Green Lane, London, EC1R 0QH Email: [camps@bunac.org.uk](mailto:camps@bunac.org.uk)

Want to advertise in the Courier?  
Call 0191 232 4050 now or e-mail [courier.marketing@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:courier.marketing@ncl.ac.uk).

# Don't believe the hype

**It's true what they say - truth really is sometimes stranger (and more sensational) than fiction.**

Of course, that's clearly not the case for tabloid editors. In their parallel universe it sometimes seems facts are boring and the truth beside the point. Both simply get in the way of what really matters, for scandal and sleaze is where it's really at. Hamster-eating musicians, popstar-snogging Vicars, and asylum seekers flooding to Britain like ants...

Except that, while the first 2 stories may actually contain a teensy bit of truth the one about asylum seekers is too often, very very false.

I set out to test what the tabloid press print compared with the real experiences of refugees and asylum seekers that I have got to know as a member of Newcastle Uni's STAR (Student Action for Refugees).

"...a tide of humanity that sees Britain as the land of milk and honey." The Sun, 22 May 2002

The idea that Britain is a 'soft touch' for those seeking asylum is a myth that rears its ugly head with alarming regularity in the press. But, not even a penny-pinching student could claim that support of £37.77 a week was somehow luxurious - after all, that's only 70% of Basic Income Support and probably less than most students spend on a damn good night out!

Now, consider my friend Mohammed. His decision to leave his home, job and life in Afghanistan wasn't motivated by a desire to live 30% below the poverty line in a boarded-up flat in Newcastle, where the Government prevents him from working, and where he is so frightened of crime that he doesn't venture out after dark. I suspect that it had more to do with the years of persecution under an oppressive regime, the daily threats of violence and fear for his life that finally swung it.

"Britain the No.1 refugee magnet"  
- The Sun, 14 September 2002

Ummm? Sorry to break it to you, but actually, not everyone in the world wants to come to Britain.

Not only did the UK rank 10th in the EU in terms of asylum applications per head of the population in 2001, but the majority of the global "burden" of refugees is borne by some of the world's poorest countries, while Britain takes in less than less than 2%.

The Sun's figures just dont seem to add up.

Those, like Teresa, forced by years of political persecution to make the difficult and desperate decision to leave her home in the Czech Republic, may head to the UK for a number of reasons. Teresa spoke some English, so heading to Britain was a purely

logical decision. Mohammed didn't know where he'd end up and didn't really mind so long as the people-smugglers he had paid to get him out of Afghanistan took him somewhere he'd be safe.

In light of the facts, the headline suddenly seems a bit stupid doesn't it?

"Losing the war on asylum crime"  
- Daily Mail, 26 November 2002

Asylum seekers are more likely to become victims of crime than its perpetrators. From the racially-motivated murder of Tayman Bahmani, an Iranian asylum seeker in Sunderland last autumn, to the bricks thrown through my Czech friend's window last term, the crimes committed against vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers is astounding - but is this the picture the tabloids present? The fact remains that the overwhelming majority of asylum seekers and refugees are not terrorists, nor have they committed any kind of crime.

"Asylum seekers: 9 out of 10 are conmen"  
Daily Star, 22 May 2002

There they go again. Check your facts guys because even the Home Office figures couldn't support you on that one, for well over 50% of asylum seekers are permitted to stay in Britain and, as many of these people are only recognised as having a valid claim when appealing against an initial decision to deport them - it seems that the quality of the Home

Office's decisions leaves an awful lot to be desired.

No one chooses to be a refugee. Teresa and Mohammed both miss their homes terribly and would like nothing more than to be able to return to their countries safe in the knowledge that they will be able to enjoy a free and decent life there.

But, as Teresa says, "that's just my dream - the same dream every night". And until that dream comes true, all she and other refugees like her ask for is "somewhere I can live my life and try to be happy again, is that too much?"

Now, are you going to answer that, or shall we let the tabloids?

Info

STAR is a charity organisation that seeks to help refugees. To get involved please e-mail [Star@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Star@ncl.ac.uk).

Starting Today (Monday 17th) there is STAR's first ever National campaign, stalls at the Union every lunchtime, and an open evening (Monday the 17th, 7-10) in the Union's Function Suite for you to find out more about STAR.

# PUB FLY

## Your unique guide to Newcastle's pubs

*Hello to you all once again... This week to GOSFORTH. Now, Gosforth is grand... a really attractive part of Newcastle and easy to get to by bus, or a short trot from South Gosforth Metro. I have been around the pubs here many times, especially with my local guide and scouts Catherine, Marky and Neil. All the pubs are along the High Street. Ladies and gentlemen... Go-forth to Gosforth!*

### Gosforth Hotel

"Let's go for a pint".  
"But it's Monday". "It's pound a pint in The Gosforth Hotel"... "Ok then, I'll get my coat".  
What a start to the week!

This pub is commendable. It has a good mix of locals and students, young professionals and a few hooligans. There are 2 bars. The back bar is a particular favourite as there is always plenty of room, the service is quick and its got a great atmosphere.

### The Earl Grey

In to another fairly 'locals' pub next; The Earl Grey. This is an ok pub, with nooks and crannies and the usual décor, with pictures of old farmers and people standing around barrels etc.

This is ideal for a quiet pint and has an excellent juke box. The staff are very friendly, up for a chat and a tale. I recommend a visit as it is a pleasure to find a pub where it's peaceful and placid.



### The Brandling Arms

The Brandling Arms then, half-way up the High Street.

This is an enormous pub, right next to the bus stop into town, which very much caters for the younger drinker.

Pretty much all the important football matches are shown here and the atmosphere is always relaxed.

The service is quick, but the computerised jukebox is a bit limited.

We haven't eaten here, but there seem to be good deals on the food and they serve mega portions.



### The County

Top pub so far then... The County. At the top of the High Street, this pub is a particular favourite. Again, a classic Newcastle pub, very traditional... with its very own coat rack and hearty fire-place! There is a back-bar here too. The avid ale drinker will be spoiled for choice, as this pub boasts a substantial selection of high quality cask ales. You will also be impressed by the food here: although slightly over-priced, the quality of the roast dinner is... well... is nearly better than one you might have at home!



# Psychic Selina Speaks with the Stars...



*A combination of star gazing, female intuition, an active imagination and a tendency to fabrication, Selina brings us her unique interpretation of the stars to guide our readers through their week...*

### PISCES (20 February-20 March):

You have a beautiful imagination and natural creativity, but indulge too much and you have a tendency to lose grip on reality. Concentrate more on living the present, on what's real and not what's in your head.

### ARIES (21 March-20 April):

What do you do on those days when you're full of aggressive energy? My astrological bible suggests you sail single-handed around the world... I'm sorry, the stars don't always take into account the impracticalities of their solutions.

### TAURUS (21 April-21 May)

I think you'd all agree you could do with some time out for yourself. Switch your phone off, bury your smart card and unplug the computer. Stock up your fridge, put your feet up and take vegetation to a whole new level.

### CANCER (23 June-23 July):

Looking for a little extra-curricular activity? Crabs should join clubs or causes that give them a chance to complain or put maternal instincts to good use. Try keeping or breeding animals - fair amount of complaining and caring involved in both I imagine.

### LEO (24 July-23 August):

Are you a typical Leo? Is your hair long, short, curly, straight or bushy? Or are you in fact bald? Yes? Well then you are a typical Leo. Isn't astrological accuracy uncanny at times!

### VIRGO (24 August-23 September):

Last week I may have damaged your reputation by implying that you favoured sleeping when it came to bedroom activities. I'm sorry, and I'd like to make it clear to the rest of the signs that there is actually a 'volcanic' sexual energy inside every Virgo just waiting to explode!

### LIBRA: (24 September-23 October)

Something special is hanging in the air for Libras at the moment. Your light is shining brighter than ever. It's a time to open your eyes to a new level of consciousness, full of new possibilities and adventure.

### GEMINI (22 May-22 June)

You're the air sign of the zodiac, breezing through life; eager to create harmony wherever you go. Just remember to be patient and, in your eagerness to put things right don't be tempted to manipulate - let things happen naturally.

### SCORPIO (24 October-22 November):

It's time to let go of that dream of the perfect partner. With that mystical stranger engraved on your mind you'll miss the real thing when it passes through your life. And remember the real thing will always arrive unexpectedly...

### SAGITTARIUS (23 November-21 December)

Can't decide where to go this summer? Why not follow your stars? Sagittarians find themselves happiest in Spain, Australia, Budapest and Toronto, and if you're not leaving the UK then Sheffield is apparently just the spot for you!

### CAPRICORN (22 December-20 January):

You guys care way too much about what others think about you, what's with this fear of looking foolish in front of people? Do you really think you're so important that they care if you mess up? Lighten up guys and try to enjoy life a little more.

### AQUARIUS (21 January-19 February):

There's no easy way to say this - you have a tendency to be the fruitcake of the zodiac. Very friendly, yes, but definitely one sandwich short of a picnic. There are other ways of being individual without being a social oddity you know. Keep that in mind.

# "This could be the start of the break-up of NATO, the EU and his own cabinet."

Not short of something to say about Blair, The Courier interviews Joe responsible for organising the 4 coach loads of students down to the Anti-War march last Saturday

By JAKE LEE  
Editor

**O**utside on a flimsy tressle table has stood Joe, religiously, every lunchtime for the last three weeks selling tickets for the march against war on Iraq last Saturday. If there is a public face to the Newcastle Uni anti-war lobby, it is probably Joe.

Cool, calm and very composed, Joe doesn't square up to the usual

student activist image. Well groomed, and extremely clued up, I feel Joe isn't so much against the system but playing the system.

"I'm concerned for the democracy of this situation and for this country" says Joe, as spokesperson for the Stop The War Coalition (STWC).

"The media are having a huge debate on this issue. It is due to the failure of an effective opposition in Parliament that Piers Morgan (Editor of The Mirror) has become the leader of the opposition.

"The Sun is coming out in the opposite camp. It's almost as if the constructive arguments that should be expressed in Parliament are being fought through a tabloid turf

**"Piers Morgan has become the leader of the opposition."**

war. Westminster has failed to hold a debate.

"Blair is playing a dangerous game. The best analogy is Thatcher's political assassination by her own party over the Poll Tax debacle."

This time it is Joe doing the stabbing alongside the 4 coach loads of students the Newcastle Uni STWC have organised and the million other protestors marching last Saturday. Student interest in tuition fee protests are dwarfed by their interest in the Iraq crises.

And it's not just Westminster

**"There are people in this Uni that could have given Blair 10x the problems he had that night."**

who Joe pinpoints for failing to hold an informed debate. When Blair recently turned up to the Baltic Art Museum in Gateshead for a grilling by Jeremy Paxman on Newsnight, Joe believes that he was given an easy ride.

"Blair was put in front of a lot of people, but still he came off better than he should have done. The BBC have a lot to answer for selecting such a passive, poorly informed and inarticulate audience. There are people in this Uni that could have given Blair 10 times the problems he had that night."

The arguments against war are both simple and complex. "American Foreign Policy in the Middle East has always been about oil. As long as America dominates it, it always will be" claims Joe but admits "oil is the prize but not the sole reason for Bush's need for conflict."

Germany and France have put their heads above the parapet and oppose the war in NATO discussions. These are all noises the anti-war camp need to hear.

"I think it is good news that the situation has brought about a sea change in thought amongst EU States."

"Blair has placed himself in an uncomfortable political position. This could be the start of the break-up of NATO, the EU and his own cabinet."

It's evident to everyone - hawks or doves - that the Iraq crisis is huge, and the march last Saturday only goes to prove this.

**"We simply won't be able to cater for the number of students interested."**

"I feel that feelings caused by the international situation have snow-balled so much that we will struggle to represent the Newcastle Uni Students' Union, unless we receive further support from the University with regard to infrastructure and organization. We simply won't be able to cater for the number of students interested."

"The Students' Union has supported us financially and morally. Members of union staff have apologised for not being able to help more. For example, as a society we were unable to sell tickets at reception for the march. We found that Union Officers showed genuine regret on this matter."

"The main concern now is to turn this into some kind of pressure group."

"Show me a party that captures the imagination of youth. Young voters have a say, and the current system is failing them."



Week 10:

## ABOUT A GIRL

**T**hey say that six weeks after New Year is when all those good resolutions go to pot. Well, not this year. This year I'm determined to keep my resolution. I'm going to go to the gym three times a week - well, maybe twice.

I'm getting better at dragging myself out of bed on a cold Newcastle morning (or lunchtime) and putting myself through reps in the weights room (see - I know the lingo). I can tell I'm getting better because I don't need as many chocolate bars to recover after an hour working out.

**"I do quite like the gym - not so much as to invest in one of those pink velour tracksuits, but I consider myself to be a semi-gym bunny."**

There's something about the gym that makes me head straight to the sweet shop. I can justify the gorging because I've just been to the gym, but I guess that defeats the whole object of the exercise - literally.

I guess it's a subconscious reward thing - I've been good so I get sweets. That's logical. Maybe I should rank my rewards according to the time and effort spent sweating it out on the Stairmaster. Five minutes is worth at least a sherbet dib-dab. A whole hour - you're looking at a family sized bar of Dairy Milk, baby!

Don't get me wrong. I do quite like the gym - not so much as to invest in one of

those pink velour tracksuits, but I consider myself to be a semi-gym bunny. Because it's not just the fitness aspect that you can benefit from - there's also the respect aspect. Turn up to lectures with wet hair and a slightly flushed look; reply slightly out of breath "working out at the gym" when you get asked where you've been, and suddenly people think you're the champion of cross-trainers and the equivalent of running machine royalty.

It just seems that everyone else has got the same idea. Even true gym-bunnies, lycra and all, now have to queue for a five minute run on the treadmills. I worry that people

are going to cool down and horror of horrors, pull a muscle. The thing is, despite the fact that you look the worst you possibly can at the gym (red face, plastered down hair and Primark t-shirt), people refuse to enter into the spirit of things and start their own work out on the floor. I'm talking primary school stylee - star jumps and squats on the mats.

Let's start a revolution - put those queues to use. First one to do 100 star jumps gets a gold star.

JENNIE LAWRENCE

# OUR VERY OWN ANGELS OF THE NORTH



With National Volunteer Week here, we thought it was time to prove student life is more than getting drunk, watching This Morning and missing lectures...

By VICTORIA FALLON, KATY NEEP  
and KATIE KNOWLES

**FOR THOSE of you who have managed to make it to the first floor in the union you may have noticed the Student Community Action Newcastle office (SCAN).**

From here you could be propelled into a whole new world of volunteer bliss, with friendly staff at hand to help you along the way. There is a whole variety of volunteer work accessible, from working with kids to D.I.Y. from conservation and outdoor projects to fundraising. Whatever skills you have SCAN will find a use for them. And for those of you that are interested in developing new skills, look no further, SCAN provides courses and training in number of areas.

Sophie Collier, a third year English student along with her two friends, Jenny Harvey and Aimee Wood discovered SCAN in September last year. With the end of uni life approaching, they felt it was time to get motivated, Sophie said, "at first it was something I felt I had to do, but I have actually really enjoyed it, and wish I had got involved earlier". They chose to devote their Wednesday afternoons to teaching English to a group of foreign women from PhD students to refugees, aged between 17 and 40 plus. They are responsible for how they run the

sessions, which requires them to prepare lessons and worksheets beforehand, however as Aimee said "the hard work is well worth it".

Some of you may be wondering why anyone would want to give up their spare time, so here's why...

Not only will it give you a glowing CV for when you start job hunting, as Aimee found out it could also be very rewarding. Since October, she has been looking after the beginners of the group, teaching them a range of day to day conversational skills, from phoning the doctors to understanding road signs. Over this time Aimee has seen their progress and development and it has reaffirmed her desire to complete a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course when she finishes her final year. Meanwhile Jenny has found the programme a great way to learn about other cultures, she even received a recipe for a lamb kebab!

Sophie, Jenny and Aimee have found becoming involved a great way to meet new people, not only through the programme but also through SCAN itself. SCAN organises a variety of social events throughout the year, including pub-crawls and a masquerade Christmas Ball. All three students highly recommend getting involved with SCAN, Sophie said "it's a great experience and I love being part of it".

So if you're interested in getting involved then take that extra flight of stairs from the Mens Bar and pay a visit to SCAN.



## Bringing about Better Days

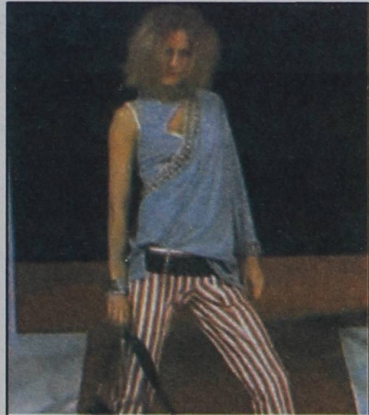
By JOHNNY SCHOLTZ

**Better Days is a project that is run for adults with learning disabilities during evenings throughout the week, at a social club in West Denton.**

SCAN has been working in conjunction with the members of the Better Days group after they approached SCAN for new volunteers for the project. The twenty members and four supervisors jointly run the club. The members take most decisions relating to the nature of the club and are very independent. They can range from playing dominoes or pool to cooking and running their own tuck shop. The club also gives them access to other activities run by organisations such as Mencap, allowing a varied and busy social life. For the members of the club, Better Days provides an opportunity to socialise with friends in an active and enjoyable way that wouldn't otherwise be available to them.

Laura Wright, a second year student became involved in the Better Days Project in October 2002. On her visits she gets involved with the activities, talks to the members and provides a helping hand when necessary. For the volunteer it is challenging, although Laura said "it is good fun" and is more relaxed and stimulating than she first expected. The supervisors at the club see Laura's help as invaluable, she is clearly very popular with all of the members and they all enjoy meeting new faces. This project does not require the volunteers to have any past experience or training, all that is needed is enthusiasm and a willingness to help. Laura did explain however that patience and any handicraft skills are a bonus. Laura is hoping that this experience will benefit her in the future when she enters the medical field. This project is always on the look out for new volunteers, so if this appeals to you then polish up on your domino and pool skills and sign up to the Better Days project in the SCAN office.

# LONDON...PARIS...NEWCASTLE...MILAN



Top £22, Hat £10 - TOPSHOP

Right:  
Top £16  
Topshop  
Trousers  
£25  
Topshop



LEFT:  
Top £16  
Topshop,  
Jeans -  
Model's  
Own



Top £20, Combats £40, Necktie £6  
TOPSHOP

## Come back 1980's

All is forgiven as we review the decade fashion tried to forget

By ROSE ????

**M**ost of us consider the Eighties to be the decade that style forgot, and look back in horror at the scary shoulder pads and even scarier make up. But this season, our childhoods have come back to haunt us, because the Eighties are back and looking fabulous.

For some, the memories may be too vivid from the first time around to see these looks from a new angle. But this season's designs have a distinctly modern edge that you simply wouldn't grasp from digging out your

mother's old wardrobe. Think Debbie Harry or the cast of "Fame", with a hint of Jade Jagger and a sassy twist of Stella McCartney.

The interest in this look arises from the dramatic change in silhouette. Designers have dropped the Nineties' slim fit tops and baggy trousers for voluminous off-the-shoulder tops, which slouch over minis or skintight trousers. For jackets, sharp shoulders and nipped in waists form the essential shape. Bold stripes and fluorescent prints also look fresh especially on little ra-ra skirts, (see Cacharel spring/summer 2003 show).

However, there is a limit to the cool influence of this decade. I probably need not remind you, that even if you do have the pins of Naomi, leggings are best left in the past!



Skirt £25 Topshop  
Top £16 Topshop



Top £28 GAP  
Skirt £25 Topshop

Right:  
Top £25  
GAP,  
Skirt -  
model's  
own



LEFT:  
Burberry's  
collection  
2003



Top £30 Topshop  
Skirt £20 Topshop



### Park Life

Entirely versatile and effortlessly cool, the parka is back and in fierce demand. An adornment in the wardrobes of the fashion elite (a la Kate Moss), Newcastle's trend-setters are certainly not far behind. A range of colours, styles, lengths and accessories, (take a look at the fluffy number below), enriched the autumn catwalks and now seem set to take over the high streets of our northern world. Just make sure you're the one in the know this season by purchasing a duvet-esque cover up. After years teetering around in the depths of winter in flimsy summer-worthy attire your mother will finally be able to put her worries to sleep. The Gallagher's, it seems were way ahead of vogue. Northern in their roots, who could be cooler?

THEA STEVENSON And KATE WADE-WALKER

C  
M  
Y  
K

# the THONG

Volume 01 Issue 02

Almost Everything Exposed

17-23 February 2003

## Exams Getting Easier, Smart-Bombs Not Getting Smarter

By Jerome Starkey  
Thong Correspondent

**A report published today by the Weapons of Limited Destruction Education Enquiry has revealed alarming shortcomings in "smart-bomb" literacy levels.**

The report claims that tests, which measure a bomb's ability to accurately hit its target, have grown progressively easier since they were first introduced twelve years ago.

The MoD had claimed that improved test scores showed the bombs were getting smarter. However, the results of this enquiry indicate that the opposite is true.

The enquiry analysed the accuracy of over four thousand bombs dropped in the last decade and found no significant improvement.

Lord Faulks, who chaired the enquiry, said the public had been "duped" over the effectiveness of "so-called smart-bombs."

"Smart-bombs explode just like the old fashioned ones," Lord Faulks said.

"There is nothing smart about accidentally killing innocent people.

"[Smart-bombs] are a convenient myth, eagerly



Not So Smart: A Harrier pilot checks his bombs on board HMS Invincible in the Gulf

believed by a public keen to shirk responsibility for causing civilian deaths. They are part of a credible propaganda campaign which has the public believing in the apparently clinical nature of modern warfare."

The report cited the bombing of a civilian shelter in Baghdad during the 1991 Gulf War and the strike on

the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo conflict in 1999, as two high-profile examples of "smart-bomb" failures.

The MoD accuracy tests have been repeatedly reviewed since their introduction, after it was alleged that the original test format did not cater fairly for dyslexic weapons.

These latest findings come at an awkward time for the MoD, which is currently deploying hundreds of these bombs for use against Iraq.

However, the defence secretary Geoff Hoon seemed unmoved when questioned in Parliament yesterday.

"I understand the public's concern," Mr Hoon told MPs. "On the surface this report is

troubling, but the weapons we have available for use in the Gulf are currently undergoing intensive training and will be on peak performance should they be needed in an offensive strike."

But people in Iraq appeared to take little comfort from Mr Hoon's attempts to reassure. Mohammed al'Shaarif, an Iraqi businessman living in Baghdad, was one of many civilians to express anger at the enquiry's findings, and Mr Hoon's reaction.

"It's more than bloody troubling," Mr al'Shaarif said. "Their stupidity could cost us our lives."

The shadow defence secretary, Bernard Jenkin blamed the results on poor teaching and yesterday called on the government to review the Weapons of Limited Destruction education programme.

"The Blair Government has broken its election promises to reduce missile class sizes, and improve ballistic teacher training," Mr Jenkin said.

"By increasing the cost of further education we can only expect to see more untrained missiles joining the workforce, or we will see them going to America to complete their training there."

### IN BRIEFS



**SAUNA:** Guests on board the Tuxedo Princess are being offered a free sauna while they party. Management hailed this as a promotion, but punters suspect it may be because the air conditioning is broken.

**CHEATS:** University professors have been urged to look out for an unusual kind of plagiarism after rumours emerged that the MI6 might be copying students' work. Tutors have told students not to leave work unattended, especially if it might be used in an intelligence dossier.



**JESMOND:** The Jesmond Residents Association successfully blocked the opening of a new bar on the Osborne Road. They said that one more bar might make Jesmond trendy - something they are determined to prevent.

## Andrex Commercials Degrading To Labradors

**A group of Labradors and Golden Retrievers has filed an official complaint to the Equal Opportunities Commission, claiming Andrex commercials are degrading to their species.**

The chairdog of the cross-species delegation, Rex, said it was time canine stereotypes were broken down, once and for all.

"Andrex have built their advertising campaign around the clichéd image of a soft and cuddly puppy," Rex said.

"It is an emasculating image that many dogs, in the generic sense, are uncomfortable with.

"The Andrex-image is particularly damaging for aspiring gun-dogs and some of our members from that profession are considering

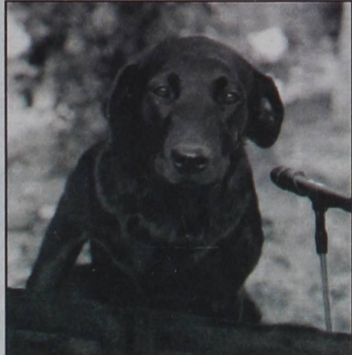
suing for loss of earnings," Rex added.

In a statement released this week, Andrex's chairman said the company did not mean to cause any offence through their commercials, and invited Rex to attend a meeting to resolve the problem.

However, the statement made no indication as to whether the company plans to withdraw the ads from circulation.

Rex's owner, Sara Childs, said she was very proud of Rex for all his work, and said she would try and make sure he could get to the forthcoming meeting.

Rumours in America indicate that some bears are planning to follow Rex's lead, and challenge their species' cartoon portrayal in Charmin commercials.



**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: Rex speaks out.**

## House Politics Reach Insane Levels In 29 Tavistock Road

By Tom Mullen  
Thong Correspondent

**A diplomatic frenzy erupted last night at a student residence in Jesmond after it emerged that two Dairylea triangles were missing from the top shelf of the fridge.**

A housemate made allegations of pilfering only days after it was discovered that supplies of shower gel had been significantly depleted in mysterious circumstances, in the house on Tavistock Road.

When questioned by Oliver, the owner of the missing groceries, housemates Jim and Paul 'Ken' Kennedy refused to comment on their whereabouts at the time of the suspected felonies.

Another resident proceeded to withdraw his money from the house kitty after claims that he hadn't actually been food shopping in three weeks.

House talks eventually broke down after it emerged that housemate Tom had used the last tea bag, and hidden some communal toilet roll in his



**TEMPERS FRAYED: Tavistock Road**

bedroom.

Sources close to those involved speculate that a mediator from neighbouring student house, 10 Sunbury Avenue, may be called in to resolve the crisis.

Acting as spokesman for number 29, housemate Gary told the Thong: "It's really quite ridiculous. I mean, when we moved in we expected the occasional tiff here and there about stuff like washing up, or whose turn it is to answer the telephone, but Oliver's wild Dairylea accusations are ludicrous, petty and actually quite

hurtful."

Tearful housemate Paul added: "Sometimes we come home drunk, and the temptation to make a cheeky sandwich with someone else's cheese is strong, but I would never dream of actually committing such an outrage."

Paul later denied claims that he is well known to Scotland Yard's Pilfer-Elimination Branch for a spate of crimes, including theft of hair gel, toothpaste and aftershave.

The University has been informed and an investigation is underway.

Valentine's Rubbish? Find an imaginary partner in the THONG personals section coming soon

# REVIEWS

## Cinema



### FINAL DESTINATION 2

**ALTHOUGH THE film was meant to have been a 'Final Destination' for those teen actors the first time round, somehow they've managed to return to serve up a second helping of death defying events.**

Essentially, this sequel is a pile of rubbish. Whilst driving her friends down to Daytona, Kimberly has a premonition that she and her friends will die horribly in a car pile-up, so she pulls over and blocks the freeway. As Officer Burke (Michael Landes) questions her, they see the pile-up happen just as she foresaw. Similar to the first film, those who survived the collision, thanks to Kimberly, have been put on 'Death's list' and are forced to deal with the fact that Death is trying to kill them. The survivors get in touch with the only survivor of the first film, Clear Rivers (Ali Larter), to try and find a flaw in Death's

design. But can Clear, Kimberly and the others cheat Death?

Apart from the already established Clear, we know very little about the characters at the start of the film and very little attempt is made to remedy this in the rest of the film. Unlike the original, none of the characters are connected in any way whatsoever, apart from a mother and her teenage son. This affects how you view the film as, with such flat, two-dimensional characters, you feel nothing for them when they die.

The film is very formulaic, as it's just death after death, with no really big plot twists or surprises. Plot wise, the film gives us a bit of explanation for the seemingly obvious, but yet other parts of the plot have holes so big that a fleet of trucks could be driven through them. Sadly, what seemed like an original idea in the first film has become stale and very little effort has been made to change or evolve this concept, so it feels like quite a disappointing experience.

Ultimately, you leave the cinema feeling unfulfilled and wondering why you even bothered. The film is unsustaining and underdeveloped so only go and see it as a last resort, and if you have money to burn.

276

**DANIELLE GIBSON & ALEXIS FORSYTH**

**HOT FLICKS RATING:**



### THE WILD THORNBERRYS

**ANIMATED MOVIES have been enjoying a comeback. Often benefiting from computer generated techniques, the likes of Shrek, Monsters Inc and the much underrated Antz, have combined sophisticated visuals with scripts that enthrall kids while providing enough sly asides to keep adults entertained.**

The Wild Thornberrys Movie, from the Klasky Csupo team responsible for animating the first three series of The Simpsons and subsequently creating Rugrats, has a more elementary approach with oddly drawn characters. The story's heroine, the 12 year old Eliza Thornberry (voiced by Lacy Chabert), is an archetypal geek with glasses, braces on her teeth and hair in pigtails. She travels with her parents around the jungle in a Winnebago and, like Dr. Dolittle, has been granted the magical power of being able to talk to animals. She sets out to rescue a cheetah that has been abducted by poachers and uncovers a larger conspiracy to exterminate a herd of elephants.

Along the way, Eliza encounters numerous obstacles, including being sent to boarding school in England by her grandmother, Cordelia, who Lynn Redgrave gives the voice and attitudes of a member of the royal family. Some of the film's funniest scenes result from her companion, a chimp called Darwin, smuggling himself into the school in Eliza's bag and causing mayhem by experimenting with make-up and wearing school uniform which leads to a particularly memorable set-piece of a food fight in the dining hall.

Darwin's snobbery also serves as an amusing counterpoint to that of the private school kids. Having utilised her roommate's credit card, Eliza flies back to Nairobi and hooks up with Sloan (Rupert Everett) who claims to be a conservationist but proves to be behind the plot. Even in animated films, the British are getting the villainous roles. One of the film's curiosities is that while the parents and grandparents have English accents so posh that they are only ever heard in Hollywood movies, Eliza and especially her elder sister, Debbie, who has a fine line in petulant teen sarcasm, speak with American accents.

The film acts as a kind of parable about the dangers of human greed and occasionally lays its message on too heavily for its target audience. While its exaggerated stereotyped characters offer amusement, there are dull periods and The Wild Thornberrys Movie can be seen as a poor cousin of The Lion King.

**ANDREW NEAL**

**HOT FLICKS RATING:**



### TWO WEEKS NOTICE

**IN WHAT is a very watchable rom com, the comic abilities of Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock come together in a great on-screen love affair. The film showcases the talents of Marc Lawrence in the directors chair, who wrote Bullock's last hit film Miss Congeniality, and the disappointing Mickey Blue Eyes which starred Hugh Grant.**

Grant takes the role of property tycoon, George Wade, and Bullock as a cause fighting civil lawyer. Although the film lacks a strong story line, the two leading characters compensated with genuine comic acting and a evidently strong working relationship.

The audience were kept entertained throughout, although not to the point of rolling in the aisles with laughter. It lacks credibility with slightly unrealistic elements such as Bullock being portrayed as a size eight overreater. Also it is left unclear why her character, Lucy, sidelined her ideas to become Wade's attorney.

The weak plot is also exposed again when the film's crisis point is supposedly created by a dilapidated community centre.

Although viewers may be disappointed to see Hugh Grant playing himself (again) it is what he does best. Overall this is an enjoyable film with the inevitable happy ending, and with Valentine's day approaching, it could be just the thing.

**SARAH BENNETT & AMY HUGHES**

**HOT FLICKS RATING:**



## books

### THINGS MY GIRLFRIEND AND I HAVE ARGUED ABOUT

by **MIL MILLINGTON (HODDER)**

**Mil Millington has pink hair. This was my initial thought when I saw the cover for his first novel, Thing My Girlfriend and I have Argued About.**

It's not really how I imagined the typical writer of the thirty-something-new-man-who-always-gets-everything-wrong genre of books, which is so popular at the moment, to look. Clearly, appearances aren't important though and this

novel is excellent and its central character is no more strange than your average man (or woman, of course).

Millington began his writing career as a columnist for the Guardian Weekend magazine - with the same title as his book - in which he describes arguments with his German girlfriend. The idea came from a website that he set up for practice whilst working in the IT department of Wolverhampton University. The website achieved cult status. His novel is a fictionalised version of the column and has resulted in him being named one of the Guardian's top five new authors of 2002.

The central character of the book is Pel Dalton. Interestingly enough he works, or at least pretends to work, in the IT department of the University of the North of England and also, like Millington, has a German girlfriend, Ursula, with whom he argues frequently. Pel lives in a questionable area, has two children and, according to Ursula, never seems to get anything right.

Pel's attempts to handle normal situations such as moving house, hierarchy at work, bringing up his children and surviving life with his girlfriend are dealt with in a witty and sensitive way which allows the reader to warm to the characters, even Ursula, whose temperament appears to be stormy to say the least. You will like Ursula because you can see how much Pel loves her.

Although the main plot of the book, which begins with the disappearance of Pel's boss and encompasses embezzlement, scandal and involvement with the Triads, is perhaps verging on the ludicrous, the sincerity of the relationships, feelings and episodes described, which are clearly written about from personal experience - such as when Pel is trying to avoid telling his son that Father Christmas doesn't really exist - make it seem believable. Millington addresses real problems, such as fear about one's manhood, in an amusing way which lightens important issues without trivialising them. Because of this, and the fact that even the minor characters are described so well, with the use of humour for the little details, you really feel like you know Pel and you are part of his life.

Things My Girlfriend and I Have Argued About is laugh out loud funny, realistic, insightful and thoroughly entertaining. It is also easy to read and follow yet none the less clever and well written. It appears to come from the Nick Hornby school of hopeless man books and is no exception to the general rule in that it is very good. Millington is currently adapting 'Things...' for the screen and I for one can't wait.

**FRAN NAISH**

# comedy

## COMEDY NIGHTS

### @ THE HYENA CAFE

**IT'S THE start of a new term and the old bank balance has been replenished. Time to start avoiding those book shops and spending away your hard-borrowed money on your social life. For those of you bored with the usual beer-guzzling, kebab-eating jaunt down to Blu Bambu every week, the Hyena Cafe can offer a refreshing and very entertaining change. This surprisingly large venue is student friendly, reasonably cheap, often open late and it showcases some of the funniest comedians on the national circuit.**

### MIKE MILLIGAN & DAVE JOHNS

6/02/03

**GEORDIE COMIC Mike Milligan appears regularly on the Hyena's jam-packed programme, his unique blend of comedy often reflecting his northern roots.**

Beware if you choose to sit near the front as much of Mike's act involves picking out unsuspecting victims for a spot of 'friendly' banter! His most recent victims have included performing arts students ("so you're lined up for a job at Tesco's then?"), a policeman and a handful of Sunderland supporters. In Sunderland, as Mike tells us, DSS stands for "do you have a shell suit!"

His act is not exclusively Geordie. In fact, much of his material focuses on the south as well as the north, although Londoners might feel a little bit riled at his assertion that the Hyena "isn't some Cockney Twat club!" He's not afraid to get a little bit political either. It was really refreshing to see him spend around ten minutes poking fun at a striking fireman! This comic's reputation is growing fast on the national comedy scene and like Brown Ale, his act travels well.

If Milligan's performance is a little too vulgar for some, the internationally recognised Dave Johns shouldn't disappoint. Also hailing from the north, Dave's cheeky-chappy, slightly Connelly-esque style hits the spot, and like Milligan, he's not afraid to be a little bit daring.

However, where his Michael Jackson jokes were as hilarious as they were topical (you can imagine) his jape about putting mousetraps on the Tyne bridge to snag the long beards of any would-be Al Qaeda visitors to the region tried the patience of a few. As did the one about suicide bombers on the Metro.

But those who turned their noses up were in the minority as Dave's subject matter spans student jokes, footy gags (Leeds supporters stay at home) and Geordie classics like 'when you see a Polar Bear on Northumberland Street you

know spring is on the way!'

If these two headliners were not enough to have you choking on your beer the night continued with Radio Four's Judith Finnigan, making her stand-up debut - a little more orthodox than Milligan and Johns, but certainly worth a giggle. Or ten. The Hyena will be hosting a whole feast of talent throughout February and March. Catch Dave Johns again on the 20th, 21st and 22nd alongside 24 year old Lucy Porter and the very original Kerry Talmage.

TOM MULLEN

## SOUP

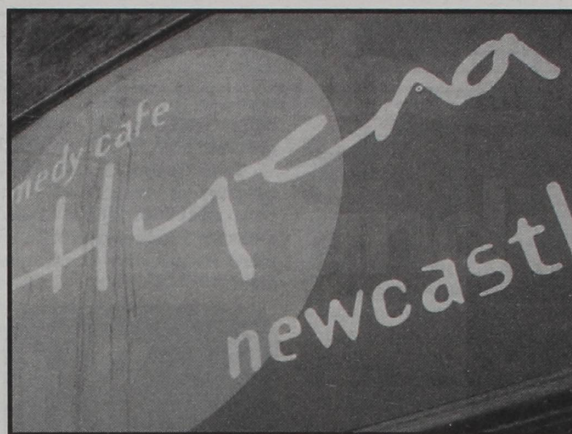
### EVERY FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

**The SOUP sketch show, appearing regularly on the first Tuesday of every month, is a bold production of experimental comedy, thankfully still producing original gags and clever sketches though in its third year.**

Such is the nature of sketches, particularly live, that it is hard to keep the pace and the audience's concentration constant for the full two hours, but the comperes, Laurel and Hardy-like duo Heinz and Pugsley, constantly invigorate the pace. And with a rotation of guest contributors and some real gems within the line-up, the show rarely feels laboured.

The show's particular strength is in its awareness of the needs of the audience, intertwining conventional sketches with short films and audience participation. Probably the most successful part of the show is the 'What Am I' variation on '20 questions', with the audience shouting out answers epitomizing the charm of the show: the show is much more endearing when the performers use their own wit, when things obviously go wrong, props breaking or facing heckles, and they are able to deal with it, enhancing the show immeasurably with its lack of formality and revealing their real flair for comedy.

While some of the longer sketches lacked energy beyond the first laughs, the periodic continuation of short sketches



developing familiar characters and catch phrases in the same way that made The Fast Show so popular. James Bond, for example, using ridiculous sexual innuendos while shopping at the grocers for plums, and choosing between knobs and knockers at the hardware store; or different psychotic individuals say the same lines as hairdressers, all reflect the show's lack of pretense and its bond with the audience.

It is only the grand finale of pirates kidnapping the comperes that the audience worried about the last Metro home and the pace finally ran out. This was a shame, for this anti-climax marred what was an enjoyable rather than a riotously funny night. The 'Goth Watch' sketch, of the migration of moshers and Goths towards war memorials outside Eldon Square, etc, provided a largely sympathetic audience with the real gem worth waiting for.

WILL WALSH

## COMEDY ON TAP

@THE GLOBAL CAFE  
10/02/03

**A RELATIVELY hostile crowd jeered at the compere as we were introduced to the first act of the night, Middlesbrough born Patrick Monahan.**

The local act didn't waste any time in making a mockery of students, pulling on some poor 'volunteer' and making him do an impromptu performance of the Queen song 'We will rock you'. They donned Freddie Mercury moustaches and gyrated against the microphone stand to the amusement of all.

The comedian seemed to be feeding off the audience and improvising as he went along, stealing people's hats and asking the audience questions. He then treated us to his own special version of episode 32 of Postman Pat, in which he danced around the stage with a fluffy fake cat in a frenetic manner, recreating scenes from Titanic to Trainspotting. Mildly amusing.

Next up was Hal Cruttenden, a self-confessed 'effeminate posh poof'. Hailing from London, a completely different approach to stand-up was witnessed. Here the joke was on him, not on us. London and his Northern Irish wife were the main sources of humour where his life was concerned, as well as his camp voice, his

upbringing, and his physical presence. Combined with Hal's huge chip on his shoulder, the result was hilarious. He was not afraid to push the boundaries, which resulted in one moment of silence and then a despondent Hal saying 'Er, new gag, never again, thanks Newcastle.' The audience were in tears.

The headline act was the winner of the BBC New Comedy Award, so expectations were high. However, Jason John Whitehead did not deliver. His laid back Canadian drawl seemed far too settled for someone who was here to prove himself. Staggering on with a crazy two bottles of beer, he told us about the UK through the eyes of a Canadian. He thought our drinking habits were insane, our pop music the worst in the world and condemned our public transport to "I see why they're called Virgin trains, they've obviously never done it before!" But his opinion seemed dated, with the audience not laughing as much as they did in the second act. Perhaps the funniest part was his slaying of Canadian pop imports such as Avril Lavigne, and his hatred of Kylie. Whitehead's chilled out demeanour may give the impression he knows what he is doing, but his performance failed to impress. Maybe he was too drunk.

It must be said that the comedy on tap in the global will quench even the thirstiest of laugh seekers, the giggles are brewed to perfection, but, as with any pint, the quality can vary.

ANDREW DAVIES

# theatre

## THE MYSTERIES

@ THE THEATRE ROYAL

**THE SHEER individuality of The Mysteries, a South African interpretation of the Chester Cycle of Medieval Bible stories effortlessly flitting between English, Afrikaans, Latin, Zulu and**

**Xhosa, was enough to make this production a theatre event, but such was the joy that it brought to the stage that the spontaneous standing ovation was entirely keeping with the hopeful exuberance of the play. Performing milestones within the Bible story, from the fall of Lucifer, the creation, Adam and Eve, their sons Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, before encompassing the life of Jesus, the cast endlessly shifted languages but never confused, appropriating the universal nature of their renewed works. Mary was black, Joseph was white, Pilate barracked in English and Jesus mournfully replied in Xhosa.**

The Mysteries' energy surged through the cast and the audience, the infectious joy of

performed dances upon the glory of God was easily and instantly transmitted to the audience - the stories are dealt with such joyful irreverence, with such energy and vigour that the austerity and sobriety that the Bible typically inspires nowadays was totally revised. Satan hisses, clad in red leather, flames lick the stage, Noah's wife winks at God, God dances while chiming on a wine bottle, Mary challenges Jesus to a dance contest, Noah's family burst with elation at the decree to 'Go forth and multiply', Herod is an African dictator similar to portrayals of Idi Amin, his soldiers are a modern army with boots and truncheons - the modern blends effortlessly with the medieval.

From first until last the grand ensemble of dance and chorus swell the spirits, but the individual touches of human foibles - Cain claiming he does not know where Abel is, with the bloody corpse of his brother lain beside him; the evasiveness of Noah's wife upon being told of the plans for the ark in

the middle of their chicken farm - makes the character of the stories more sympathetic and human. And it is the visual and audible which makes this production extraordinary, the exuberance of colour and energy in the dance, while also the harrowing shudder of metal pipes banging as the nails are hammered into Jesus' flesh.

WILLIAM WALSH

ALBUMS

**KID LOCO**  
**Another Late Night**

Following in the footsteps of acts such as Groove Armada, Zero 7 and Rae and Christian, Kid Loco is the latest to feature in the brilliant 'Another Late Night' series. In this series some of the more refined and respected (i.e. good) luminaries of the dance world compile a mix of tracks by other artists they love, and actually create a new cover of one of their favourite songs (for the record Groove Armada covered 'Fly Me To The Moon' and it is the bollocks).

Kid Loco is the man who allegedly introduced Bob Dylan to the electric guitar, was buddies with Jerry Garcia, and invented scratching. Where would we all be without that! Not bad credentials then.

It is the blending of so many different styles into a smooth and sumptuous mix that make this album so great. This is highlighted right at the beginning, the latino tinged guitars of Gabor Szabo's 'Mizrab' mixing smoothly into 'Hard Stuff' by The Herbaliser. Genius.

Also featuring the fantastic Aim, The Underwolves and even more bizarrely a song by Departure Lounge called 'Tubular Belgian in My Goldfield' (I thought it was funny, anyway) this album has a little bit of hip-hop, a little bit of funk, and a lot of soul. Kid Loco's cover of 'Paralysed' by Gang of Four helps to draw the album to a cracking close. This is a worthy addition to possibly the best dance compilation series in a boring world of Essential Greatest Dance Albums in The World Ever Volume 367 etc etc.

Adam Berman

**DAVID HOLMES**  
**Analyze That: OST**

I'm not feeling particularly over-qualified to review this album, as I have to admit to not having seen either 'Analyze This' nor its sequel; 'Analyze That'. However, the music is courtesy of David Holmes, who's already proved his cinematic abilities with his soundtracks for 'Ocean's Eleven' and 'Out of Sight', and the appearance of his

name in the credits usually bodes well for the musical content.

The album itself is an easy listen, erring mostly on the side of jazz-style melodies interspersed with a more Holmes-like electronic feel.



However, while Holmes' musical output has always been prolific, it's hard to get rid of the feeling that he might be spreading himself a little thin over the recent year or so, not allowing himself to concentrate on any one specific project. This album, like his band The Free Association, is good enough, but do not seem up to the standards that Holmes himself has previously set.

Allison Harvie

**INSANE CLOWN POSSE**  
**The Wraith Shangri-La**

From Detroit, Michigan, USA, Insane Clown Posse's highly shocking rap/metal fusion is back in form of 'The Wraith Shangri-La'. The Wraith is a hard-hitting rap metal album that should tickle the music minds of all you rockers out there. Creatively weaving between hard rock and rap, this is the album that should finally see



the Insane Clown Posse become a household name. Although maybe not among some religious groups who strongly objected to the group's first controversial album 'The Great Milenko' in 1997.

However, with tracks like 'Welcome to the Shadow', that hold a strong rock presence to jams like 'Murder Rap' and 'Stainless Forecast' that are



tremendous rap metal musical works, the Wraith keeps your ears glued to the stereo all through the album. The Wraith is a must have for all you rap metal fans out there

Robert Mwemeke

**GENE FARRIS**  
**Textures Vol. 1**

Textures Volume 1 is the first mixed compilation from Chicago's Gene Farris, and is also his first offering on CD. Indeed, finding such a successful DJ and producer who has managed to show this level of commitment and restraint really is uncommon given the current popularity of dance music. With an extensive discography of over forty productions and releases on esteemed labels including Defected/Fluential, 83 West and home of Silicone Soul, Soma records, the man really is a legend as far as House is concerned.

The compilation is unleashed on Gene's own imprint Farris Recordings and, as is the way with such compilations, it has a considerable number of records from the same artist. The result however, is not a boring one. A bit of deviation from the chunky 4/4 continuum would have livened it up, but the CD still manages to capture Farris' energetic approach to dance floor domination, right from the deep and sultry opening through to the tougher stuff. As well as featuring remixes from house favourites Miguel Migs and Alexander East, the compilation also showcases new talent from the label such as Roomska, Audiowhores and Boo Williams with many records that won't get a full release until summer. If Mark Farina meets Derrick Carter sounds like your idea of fun, make sure you get this quick. You won't be disappointed.

Sarah Chapman

**BENT**  
**The Everlasting Blink**

On face value Bent are the type of group I was born to hate; two middle-aged men, straight out of Hoxton, complete with an ironic taste in medical-wear and one oh-so-cool 80's mullet. But beneath the 'Shoreditch Twat' veneer 'The Everlasting Blink', the Nottingham duo's second album, is one totally blissful listening experience.

The sonic mix of electronica and lush percussion with bizarre cameos from such fading stars as David Essex and Billie Jo Spears creates something pretty beautiful; sort of like Basement Jaxx on Nyctol, all dreamy beats

and strange, twinkling noises.

Okay there are a few wobbly moments, the pan-pipes and tribal drums on 'Exercise 3' only just manage to avoid being a chill-out compilation cliché and the last track on the album, 'Thick Bar', does drag slightly during its 22 minute duration, but to be honest there aren't really any tracks that you feel the need to skip through or miss out.

'The Everlasting Blink' probably isn't the kind of album that you would buy unless you really had a clue who Bent are and hadn't assumed them to be trendy dance fodder, but perhaps the kids with the expensive trainers and identikit hair are on to something, it will certainly surprise you. Try as you might to dislike this album it'll suck you in with its pretty, crazy tunes.

Bent might look daft in their ER garb, but 'The Everlasting Blink' is definitely one of the most intelligently crafted releases in recent months and is not to be missed.

Jenni Silver

**HELL IS FOR HEROES**  
**The Neon Handshake**

'The Neon Handshake' is the first offering from the



imaginatively monickered five-piece Hell is for Heroes. Essentially, HIFH (whose members include ex-Symposium members Will McGonagle and Joe Birch) are a slightly heavier and generally better Hundred Reasons, who, with this release can rank themselves above other rivals such as Lost Prophets.

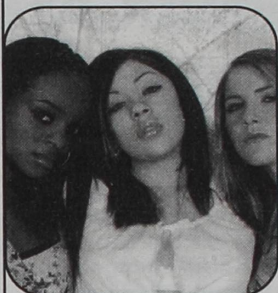
The album opens with 'Five Kids Go' which makes a pretty clear statement about where the band wants to be. Titles such as 'Cut Down', 'Few Against Many' and 'You Drove Me To It' (which is currently doing the rounds on the music channels) appear to give a certain hint of angst, but fortunately not actually in the I'm-sixteen-and-hate-my-dad bracket.

Powerful chords, drums and vocals together with some delicate and almost Pumpkins-esque guitar playing render this a decent album, which needs to be played at full volume. A sensitive side is revealed with the rather disappointingly titled 'Slow Song'; three minutes later just when you're thinking an acoustic guitar might have done it more justice, HIFH finish in their usual style. I'm just sorry I missed them at the union at the back end of last term.

SINGLES

**SUGABABES**  
**Shape**

The 'Babes blew the chart competition out of the water in 2002 with their spectacular comeback single 'Freak Like Me', a creatively crafted, sultry, upbeat anthem. The song marked one of those rare occasions when a chart pop act sells a truckload of records and receives critical acclaim from even the 'serious' music



publications.

This latest effort 'Shape', adapted from Sting's 'Shape of My Heart' isn't quite as ambitious as 'Freak Like Me', though as a standard R'n'B ballad it is more memorable than many others. The vocal performance is good, soulful even, particularly the chorus which features a male vocal harmony from Sting himself, though lyrically it is somewhat lacking with lines like, 'I've had enough / of stuff'. The Sugababes success will most likely continue as their quirkiness seems to always make up for whatever their music lacks, and they have great names like Mutya and Keisha.

Arin Keeble

**ZONGAMIN**  
**Spiral**

With a name that sounds like a Pokemon, the immediate worry is that this is going to be comical bad electronica, littered with samples about frogs and penguins, and with tracks on here called 'Giant Squid' and 'Living with Penguins' it seems that is all as it seems.

This is far from the truth: what we get instead, as the title track builds up, is a wicked kind of dirtiness, the sort of stuff that Christina Aguilera can only dream of, it's all black leather and whips. A throbbing bass line, that's dark and sinister, calling you to shake your ass to this electro-funk, there's a hint to label mates Electric Six as a stalking guitar line cuts through the dark instrumental mix. This is stuff that should be played in your local sweat box.

Backed with two brand new tracks, the second of which 'Living with Penguins' is a chaotic breakbeat strewn affair which is delivered straight from a cartoonist's mental asylum, here there are small flickers of influence from the likes of Aphex Twin and Boards of Canada. Meanwhile, 'Giant Squid' is a downtempo breakbeat affair which is dark and draws you into the depths, with its engrossing

dark edge.

This single is certainly not a damp squib at all; in fact it'll have you whipped into shape in no time at all.

Matt France

**SAINT ETIENNE**  
**Soft Like Me**

New single from the non-commercial, laid back pop generators, Saint Etienne.

Believe it or not, this band have been around since the early 90's, but very few of their singles ever get mainstream attention.

'Soft Like Me' has a fresh and 'different' feel with a very infectious chorus. This is not a great deal different from acts like the Sugababes, for example. Ultimately it is a subtle and simply nice single that is significantly better than any mainstream pop. The only real criticism would be the attempt at rapping. Think back to Robbie Williams, attempt on 'Sing When You're Winning' and the level of musical skill here is



apparent.

Rapping aside, this is a rather good pop song. It is unlikely that it will be a chart success, but if you're looking for something chilled and laidback with an excellent female vocalist in Sarah Cracknell, then this is definitely worth investigation.

David Marriott

**APPLIANCE**  
**Go Native**

Appliance are a trio consisting of James Brooks, David Ireland and Michael Parker. Having spent the last few months playing UK dates with both Oceansize and Lupine Howl. This is their first single off the new album which I can only best describe as dull and reminiscent of the Stone Roses. That's it. And if I can remember they came on the scene in the late eighties. It's now 2003 and we're still producing music of the same sound? Why bother.

The only promise this has is the b-side 'Bruises', which is nice and simple instrumental almost edging on similarities with that of Massive Attack. But this four and a half minute track ceases to go anywhere.

This latest single comes from the soon to be released 'Are You Earthed?', due in early March on Mute records.

James Perry

VINYL FRONTIER

**SPACEK**  
**Motion Control (IK7)**  
'Motion Control' is an interesting sort of downbeat, leftfield, soul track. I wouldn't want to call it R'n'B as that would then draw comparisons with the likes of Craig David and Destiny's Child, and no-one deserves that. This is a very stripped-down record, which accentuates Steve Spacek's excellent voice, which has been compared to that of Marvin Gaye and D'Angelo in the past.  
B-side 'It's Not Gonna

Happen' is slightly more meaty (for want of a better word), it has more of a Massive Attack feel to it, although the minimal stylings of 'Motion Control' are evident here too. Not really a club record, more of an after hours 'all back to mine' record. If you like that sort of thing check it out, the album's out this summer - if not the instrumental sounds quite good at the wrong speed.

Reviewed by:  
Bobby France

## INTERVIEW: POLYPHONIC SPREE - NME TOUR

When the Polyphonic Spree announced they had interview time available we panicked to be honest, what with so many of them we decided to triple-team them. In the end only frontman Tim DeLaughter turned up. Oh, well, at least we got the low down on the 'Spree and kids bicycles...

How do you start writing and collaborating your tracks with so many band members?

Basically I come in with a structured song, either on the piano or the guitar, that I've written back home. Then I'll talk about the highs and lows, then everyone starts improvising - it seems to be the best way to do it.

So it kind of builds up?

Exactly, when you start layering it, it turns into a full-bodied work. It moves really quickly and in a about half an hour the whole song is done.

Is that how you recorded your album so quickly? You completed it in three days.

Actually that was the set list. We'd been playing that set over and over a lot and we felt we needed to go and record this to get gigs and stuff.

The album is called 'The Beginning Stages', it suggests The Polyphonic Spree is still growing, have you recently acquired any new members? How many members are there at present?

Since the recording of the album there's been a couple more but we've pretty much all been there from the beginning. There's twenty-three, twenty-four of us at the moment. Basically it's the beginning stages as it was the first thing we ever did because we'd only been a band for three months when we recorded the album. We'd put this band together in two weeks. So I think it was a sonic equation I was referring to. This is the beginning and only the beginning, the next record is coming - get ready.

Have you recorded the next one? When is that released?

We finished it a week before we came over here, then we'll mix it when we get back. I'm extremely excited about it; it's the most wonderful contribution to music I've ever been part of. Truly amazing. It will hopefully be out in the summer this year. I just can't wait for you to hear it!



Is the new album a similar style to the first? Do you plan to use any more synths or the use of therimins and electronics?

It's a bit broader and the sonic qualities on it are a lot more in tune and in touch with where we are at right now. I don't know what we'll do to hypnotise the people later on it's gonna be a surprise, can't let the cat out of the bag.

The track that stood out for me on The Beginning Stages was 'A Long Day' on the UK version, which is a 40 minute electronic instrumental.

When I was making the demo I was like "how many minutes can we put on this CD?" and they said 72 so I wanted to fill it up and they said "what d'ya wanna do?" and I said "well I've got these recorded four octaves of voice from stuff I used to play around with from my last band" (Trippin' Daisy). We'd already been out for three days recording that record and this was the last thing literally, it's like four buttons and I'm like "duh duh duh duh" and I'm sitting there at the mixing desk and about 15 minutes through it I completely go to sleep, so it just goes on and on, there's a point where I'm actually sleeping.

You're quite successful in Britain. Why did you choose to come over here rather than touring America?

It's been going very well for us over here. Over in the States not nearly, they don't even know about us. We'd never left Texas before coming over here, we didn't have the money to get out of the state. We got invited to play David Bowie's Meltdown Festival in the UK and when they said they'd pay for everything, obviously we had to do it! It blew up, we played that one show and like magic all sorts of opportunities came our way, labels, promoters and all the big festivals. It just kinda started like that, real organically and before we knew it we're spending a lot of time over here.

We saw you at Leeds, what did you think of the British festivals?

They're fantastic, I wish America had more festivals like that, they just don't. They've got that Woodstock thing but that turns into a freaking nightmare. But yeah, they're immensely fun.

Previously you've toured with Granddaddy, is there a relationship between the two bands?

Well we just really hit it off, the first show we ever played was opening for Granddaddy and Bright Eyes. We were already fans of Granddaddy, but they instantly were really drawn to our band, they said "ok we want you guys to come play with us" they took us out on the Texas tour and we just really hit it off and have always stayed



in contact. We just did a split 7" which we're at the point of releasing in the states, they did one side and we did one side. Looking forward to putting it out.

Are Granddaddy an influence on you? Or other bands, such as the Super Furries, the Flaming Lips or the Beta Band?

I've been a fan of Wayne (Coyne of The Flaming Lips) for years. We've played together in the past with my old band. My last band was around about twelve years ago, which was kinda the same time The Flaming Lips were going, so if anything I've drawn from them, but I think we are different. We are both a bit unorthodox in our approach. I've always done that, my old band was the same way with a big show.

Is that why you wear white robes?

It's a part of the spirit of putting on a show, also I thought it would be distracting having that many people in their street clothes. When we first started we were projecting images onto the white robes, the choir was dead centre up-front, and projections were just on the robes.

Yeah, I heard about the projections you did at the larger venues, and also about these open acts like zoo shows, a wedding and tap dancing pensioners, is this something you want to bring to the UK?

Well with my other bands we've always had interesting shows and I can pull all that off in my own state and country cos I'm familiar, here I'm not familiar yet. I've got people working on it for when we do our own stuff. We had the zoo bring animals out, a penguin, an alligator, and a cheetah. We had a hawk, which came in and flew from one spot to the stage. They walked a penguin all the way through the crowd. It was real quiet and still, everyone was real respectful of the animals. I've have a fan from our band Trippin' Daisy, he loves this band (The Polyphonic Spree) and he said he wanted he and his fiancée to be married at a Polyphonic Spree show and I'm like "I think that's fantastic I'm flattered!" so they had a minister come in there and we had a reception which was the opening act. He's a beautiful human being, very eccentric and I

thought it was real appropriate.

One thing noticeable on the album is a running theme with the day and the sun, do you view the sun as a symbol in a spiritual sense?

It does mean a lot to me, it's basically responsible for life as we know it.

I never want to end the story, usually the way I write a song is in my bedroom with a piano and a guitar. Everything's done in the bedroom, I even have auditions for people in the bedroom, cos that's where all the equipment is - (laughing) - well, that too, we made my kids in that room too! I go in there and hit one chord on the piano or guitar, and it if it inspires me to keep going I'll just keep playing.

Instead of the Polyphonic Spree, if you had a shopping spree in a toy store, what is the first thing you'd go for?

Probably a bicycle. It's funny you said that, we were doing a video for Trippin' Daisy in Toys R Us, but we didn't let the store know. We took some bikes, and started riding around inside the toy store whilst our friend filmed us. We're just grabbing stuff off the shelves, riding around, and he's running around with the camera. This lady starts chasing us shouting at us to get out and turn the camera off. Then she grabs it and it cuts to the end. It was such a fun video to make, cos it got her being really mad. A bicycle, that's what I'd choose cos I've done it before and it was real fun!

Interviewed by:  
Lindsay Clark, Becca  
Hughes and James Perry

## LIVE PREVIEW

Mohair @ Newcastle  
Union, 20/02/03

With the music industry entering a phase of frankly sluttish behaviour - endorsing and embracing any wide-eyed innocent with foppish hair, or permatanned blonde in a mini-skirt who might, possibly, rake in a few badly needed quid for the flagging record companies - it's easy to become jaded and cynical when yet another 'next big thing' is heralded. Which is why I was sceptical when I read Mohair's press release, introducing them, in so many words, as - you guessed it -

Ed Harcourt @  
Northumbria University  
05/02/03

Despite releasing several outstanding records and regularly showing up on the touring circuit over the past couple of years, Ed Harcourt has, inexplicably, failed to make as significant an impression on the music-buying public's awareness as one might expect. With 2001's Mercury-nominated debut album 'Here Be Monsters' tucked firmly under his belt and a critically-acclaimed second 'From Every Sphere' due to be released today, it remains a mystery as to why Ed Harcourt, arguably one of the most talented and original musicians of the moment, is not hot on the heels of the Chris Martins of the world and packing out stadiums across the globe.

But for those of us who are in on the secret, this can only be a blessing in disguise, as it brings Ed and his band to the intimate venue that is Northumbria University's Second Stage. Michael J Sheehy provides support, and as a warm up for the main gig he is as smooth as they come, despite professing to be terrified, with an acoustic sound pleasingly similar to Nick Drake.

The venue is certainly not packed with a capacity crowd tonight, but those assembled in front of the stage are great enough in number to generate a warm and intimate reception when Ed and Co. finally take to the stage.

Kicking off with 'She Fell Into My Arms' the crowd erupts with delight, and it is evident that the vast majority of the turn-out tonight, braving arctic temperatures, are genuine fans. The darker sound of new album track 'Ghostwriter' precedes latest single 'All Of Your Days Will Be Blessed', which Ed informs us has entered the charts at number thirty, and despite having been on release for only two days, a good percentage of the crowd are singing along.

There's a good mix of tracks from both albums, as well as a couple from his

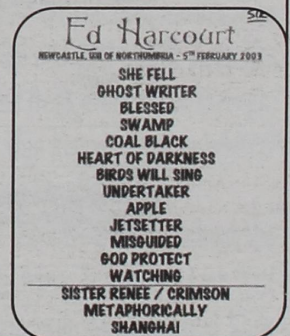
## LIVE REVIEWS

earlier 'Maplewood EP' - 'He's Building a Swamp' with its rousing trumpet intro from the super-talented - if somewhat moody-looking, - Hadrian Garrard, and the vaguely sleazy, understated 'Misguided'. The crowd rock out to the cacophonous 'Beneath the Heart of Darkness', which ends characteristically to white noise from Garrard's transistor radio, held close to the mic, fading to eerie silence in just one of the many atmospheric, tension-laden moments of tonight's gig.

Old favourites 'Apple of My Eye' and 'God Protect Your Soul' are well-received; and with the exception of a little good-natured banter between tracks the focus is well and truly on entertaining the crowd with a good selection of quality songs, rather than 'witty' anecdotes and conversation.

The encore comprises two new album tracks - the beautifully orchestrated soulful lament 'Sister Renee' and the delicate love story 'Metaphorically Yours'. Anticipation builds as the crowd wait for the closing song, but there is really only one contender - it wouldn't truly be an Ed Harcourt gig if it didn't go out with a bang to the anthemic 'Shanghai'. This is the time where the band, and the crowd, let loose and go crazy; with much spilling of beer, pounding of piano keys and tossing of hair. Were we at Glastonbury or 'V', this would be the moment where guitars would be smashed or pianos set alight. But this is Newcastle, and so Ed opts for closing the set lying face down atop his keyboard. Genius.

Sally Cook



Strokes and the Libertines in terms of review space dedicated to their 'big hair'. There is definitely more to them than interesting coiffeur though, and their single 'Superstar' provides just enough of a taster to whet the appetite for something more substantial to ruminate over. It will be interesting to see how the dynamics of the group - so smooth and tight on the single - hold up under the pressures of a solo tour.

Sally Cook

Newcastle University Union Society  
Entertainments Survey 2003

The Union Society is constantly striving to improve the student experience at Newcastle. One of the primary aims of the Union Society is to provide entertainment for Newcastle's students. This questionnaire is designed to help us tune our entertainment package.

What do you do on a night out?

1. How many nights a week do you go out? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have a regular night out? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2a. Which night is it? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What night do you never or rarely go out? \_\_\_\_\_

3a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please pick your top three reasons for going out. Ranked them 1= top reason, 2=second reason, etc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Having a quiet drink
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting very, very drunk
- \_\_\_\_\_ Socialising with your friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Socialising with your partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listening to music
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dancing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Going out 'on the pull'
- \_\_\_\_\_ Just having fun
- \_\_\_\_\_ To be part of a group
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because of a hobby or special interest
- \_\_\_\_\_ To have something to eat
- \_\_\_\_\_ To go to the cinema or theatre
- \_\_\_\_\_ To see a comedian
- \_\_\_\_\_ To be seen in the right place
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other... \_\_\_\_\_

5. How much do you spend on the following on an average evening out?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Drinks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entrance to venues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Food
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transport

6. How much do you drink on such a night out...and be honest!

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you go out aiming to get drunk? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you spend more or less on alcohol than you did last year?

\_\_\_\_\_

And Where Do You Go?

9. Where are your favourite 'club nights' (i.e. Positive', 'Flares' or 'Tricky Disco') in Newcastle?

\_\_\_\_\_

9a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Which pubs/bars do you drink at in Newcastle?

\_\_\_\_\_

10a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What do you think makes a good night out? Please include the type of venue and music that you would enjoy if you were going out.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Positive

12. Do you go to Positive? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

12a. How often? \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you do not go at the moment, have you ever gone to Positive in the past?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

13a. Why did you stop? \_\_\_\_\_

14. What are the best things about Positive?

\_\_\_\_\_

15. What are the worst things about Positive?

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you find the 7.30-8.00pm venue preparation time inconvenient?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

17. Would you make any changes to the music policy at Positive?

\_\_\_\_\_

## US media group Competition

To enter, complete this form, tear out the page and drop it in the box at reception in the Union. 1st prize: £25.00 worth of Beer Vouchers or Book Tokens, 2nd: two tickets, 3rd: two tickets to Turin Brakes, 4th: two tickets for Fools Gold, 5th: £10.00 worth of Beer Vouchers or Book Tokens.

Promotions and Posters

18. Are you on the Entertainments mailing list? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you visit their website? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

20. Have you read an Entertainments flyer? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

21. Have you seen an Entertainments poster? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

22. Is the promotion of Entertainments clear enough? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

23. How could they be improved?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bands in Newcastle

24. Do you like going to see bands? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

25. What's your favourite band venue in Newcastle? \_\_\_\_\_

25a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you see bands in the Union? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

27. What could improve bands at the Union Society?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comedy in Newcastle

28. Do you like going to see comedians? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

29. What's your favourite comedy venue in Newcastle? \_\_\_\_\_

29a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you see comedians in the Union? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

31. What could improve comedy at the Union Society?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dance Music in Newcastle

32. Do you like going to dance events? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

33. What's your favourite dance venue in Newcastle? \_\_\_\_\_

33a. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

34. Do you go to dance nights in the Union? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

35. What could improve dance events at the Union Society?  
\_\_\_\_\_

General Comments

Is there anything else that would enhance the entertainments in the Union Society?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Demographics

Gender Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Study \_\_\_\_\_

Student Type (tick as appropriate)

Mature \_\_\_\_\_

International \_\_\_\_\_

Postgraduate \_\_\_\_\_

'Local' student \_\_\_\_\_

Student with Disability \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Contact Address for Competition \_\_\_\_\_

## HOCKEY BOYS CRUSH CHESTER

### Men's Hockey

Newcastle	11
Chester	0

By Rob Anderson

**THE MEN'S 1st XI broke their hoodoo of playing at The Parks by beating Chester 11 - 0 in emphatic style with a performance of high pace and great skill.**

The first half was dominated by Adam Berman, the diminutive forward bagged a hatrick before the break in a frenzied 15 minutes.

His first goal came when Chris Standage played Jimmy Hill into the penalty circle and Hill squared it to Berman to slot past the keeper.

The second, moments later, finished off the move of the match when Harry Bourne got the ball on the left, spread it to the right from where Hutton found Berman who finished calmly.

The Adam Berman Show was briefly interrupted when James Woolley came off the bench and scored with his first touch.

The first half was closed when a penalty corner was broken down and Standage found Bourne in a yard of space at the top of the circle and Bourne drove his shot past the keeper's near post.

The second half continued in a similarly rampant vein, Bourne, brimming with confidence, began to revel in his more attacking role and justified his selection by finishing off two more moves for the most unlikely of hat-tricks, as well as laying on an open goal for Hill with an incisive run down

the left.

Hill also completed his fourth hat-trick of the season when, having scored direct from a penalty corner, he finished another good move.

Hill's tally is now 26 goals in 24 games, an impressive ratio by anyone's standards.

The scoring was completed when Rob Anderson converted a penalty stroke won when Woolley rounded the keeper only to have his shot kicked off the line by a Chester defender.

Captain Brad Davies said, "We are a young side learning our trade, I was just happy to keep a clean sheet and have a good performance."

"I hope we can beat Sheffield Hallam tomorrow to win a place in the Shield as on our day we can beat anyone in that competition."

Elsewhere, the 2nds beat Durham 3rds 2-0 with goals from Euan Aitkenhead and Rob Quiggley to clinch the title in BUSA Trophy 2B and gain a place in the Vase.



## YORK LOSE TO LACROSSE BLUES

### Men's Lacrosse

Newcastle	12
York	3

By Tom Daniell and Guy Oldring

**LAST SUNDAY saw only the second game played this season by the men's lacrosse team, but this fact, however, was not to affect their game at all.**

The game kicked off with fury as Newcastle took the game straight to their opponents, and without much wait their efforts were quickly rewarded with a fantastic underarm bolter from Andy Gemmell.

This seemed to become the pattern for the rest of the game.

Weak marking from the York defenders was to prove very costly for them, and despite a small repost it was not long before Andy managed to get in again.

And with a splendid effort from Paul 'the living Legend', Newcastle finished the quarter 3-1 up.

With Andy completing his hat-trick, the second quarter saw Newcastle consolidate their lead and another from Paul put the scores at 5-2 for the half time interval.

The second half was a glorious phenomenon with the defence remaining staunch as Team Newcastle laid siege to the opposition.

Despite the fact the Newcastle had to play the third quarter without their inspirational captain Marky Webb, midfield dictatorship and creative play showed the team which way was forward.

A slight hiccup let in a naughty goal but after a nifty link up with Tom Daniell, Guy Oldring saw fit to open his account with a cherry-popping beauty.

Barely had Team York buttoned their shirts and laced their boots for the last quarter when Webb returned to the field to score.

Not to be undone by his younger teammate, veteran striker Paul dodged, slid, goose-stepped and bulldozed his way to 4 goals, much to the delight of adoring fans.

Important mentions must go to the fantastic debut of stand-in referee Nick Daniell whose timekeeping was as accurate as his knowledge of the game.

Big Al was as ever the man mountain in goal, although the odd goal-mouth scramble, deflected shot and freak event snuck through, it seemed that this keeper grew to biblical proportions during the game.

But Al could not have done it without the solid defending from Jim Allen and Will Lucas who probed the disheartened York offensive team with their 6 foot poles.

All in all the most gratifying aspect of the 12-3 victory is that it was a merited affair, born of months of hard graft, backbreaking effort and a self-confidence that would make Muhamed Ali wilt.

With 3 hat-tricks from Andy Gemmell, Guy Oldring and that Living Legend Paul it is clear that the Newcastle men's Lacrosse team are on a rampage.

## BASKETBALL

### Men's Basketball

Newcastle	75
Leeds	62

By NICHOLAS SPAULL

**NEWCASTLE CAME out in fine form against fourth place Leeds, hoping to secure their second place position and gain entrance to the BUSA Shield.**

Taking the first quarter by storm, it took over 3 minutes for Leeds to score, but by then the home team had control, the quarter ending 18-12.

The second quarter saw the Blues further enforce their dominance and caused even more problems for Leeds.

The home defence was solid throughout and, leaving no gaps for the struggling travellers, it took them over half the quarter to get their first score, leaving Newcastle safely in control at 36-21 by the end of the quarter.

In the third quarter, the Newcastle coach started using the depth on his bench, which led to a far more interesting game, and even in their worse spells of the game they didn't look like losing, third quarter score 56-44.

The fourth quarter started with a Leeds revival, taking the game to its closest point since the first minute of the game, with Leeds within four points.

Then the midway point saw the game once again dominated by the home team and their supporters, who lead by the ever-present cheerleading team, erupted in support for the Blues leading to ten unanswered points to close the game 75-62.

Coach Phil Percival said: "The team has a lot of composure, it was tough but well deserved."

"After being written off as a team last year we've come back strong and haven't lost a single home game this season."

## WOMEN'S HOCKEY

### Women's Hockey

Newcastle	2
Birmingham	1

By NAOMI ALLUM

**NEWCASTLE CONVINCINGLY sent a confident a Birmingham side crashing to ground as they pulled off not only the performance of a season, but the league upset of the past couple of years.**

Second place Birmingham entered the match riding high from a victory against top of the league side Loughborough on Monday and boasting a near flawless record of match success. However they were not prepared for the strength and sheer gut determination of a side fighting against relegation, which they were about to meet in Newcastle.

In a simultaneous sweep, Newcastle

dashed Birmingham's hope of finishing as BUSA Champions and ensured their status as a Premier League team.

After a loss on Sunday against relegation rivals Leeds Met, only a victory against Birmingham could save the Newcastle side from starting next year in the same league as the Poly.

From the starting whistle Newcastle dominated the possession, controlling the ball well and formulating a series of convincing attacks.

Birmingham fought back as the first half progressed, but intelligent passing and quick thinking from the Newcastle side rewarded them with a goal ten minutes before half time. Top goal scorer, Emma Clarke, foiled the Birmingham defence with a nifty deflection following a swiftly taken free hit from just outside the circle.

Newcastle entered the break with a one goal advantage.

Captain Helen Reid said: "At this stage we all knew what was at stake if we couldn't contain the Birmingham attack in the second half and convert our lead into 3



points."

But after another nail biting 35 minutes, that was exactly what they did.

In a second half as fiercely fought as the first, and a string of outstanding saves from goal keeper Jo Spotswood, Birmingham equalised ten minutes before the final whistle.

Newcastle immediately fought back, scoring the winning goal with only two minutes to spare, after a sequence of outstanding play led by central mid fielder Jenny McDonough and accurately finished by striker Anna Maclehorse.

Raid added: "We certainly proved we deserve our place in the Premier League, among the top Uni sides in the country."

"Everyone put in a 100% and we accomplished what we set out to do."

Newcastle now qualify for the BUSA final 16 and for the first time in three years, Birmingham were left to make the long journey home empty handed.



## UNIVERSITY SPORTING ROUND UP

### AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Four members of the Newcastle Raiders have been selected to play for England against Scotland: Tom Evans, Chris Bland, Alex Wingrove and, selected to captain England on his testimonial, Paul Anderson.

Sunday's game against Derby showed the southerners just how dangerous the Raiders are, a 20-6 win with Derby's score handed to them with a momentary lasp of concentration by our offence.

Having only lost to the two undefeated teams in the country ranked one and two, we are now heading into the playoffs with only Glasgow in two weeks standing in our way.

We would love support for this game, as we looking at going all the way.

**Next fixture:** Saturday 22nd v. Glasgow at Gateshead

### FENCING

Against all odds the Men's team managed to win their final match and win their division. The team will now go into promotion play-offs and the BUSA Championship.

Losing the foil by a mere 9 hits was not a setback for the team due to the impressive individual display by their President, Huzaimi Kassim.

As usual the sabre team thrashed the opposition with Men's Captain Paddy Rosenkranz putting in a solid performance winning two out of his three matches.

In the final and decisive weapon, the epee, Tim Sandiford secured victory by scoring the crucial hits for the team.

Special mentions must go to BUSA individual bronze medalist Julian Rose and Kassim who went beyond the the call of duty and performed well in all three weapons despite specialising in only one.

### WOMEN'S LACROSSE

Ladies lacrosse have finished all their BUSA matches and have secured their entry into the BUSA Championship by remaining in second place.

### WOMEN'S RUGBY

The new women's rugby league team notched up another tournament win at the weekend. In addition, nine players have been selected for Great Britain students.

### SAILING

Three Teams from the sailing club competed in the BUSA north east qualifier this weekend at west Kirby.

Eleven teams from the north east took part, with two mixed teams and one ladies team qualifying.

It was a close event with most races being undecided right up to the finishing line.

Newcastle mixed firsts came first overall losing just one race against Leeds and have qualified for BUSA.

Sadly the seconds, with 5 wins, just missed out on a place at the play -offs.

The ladies also won their qualifier against Durham and Manchester and will be joining the firsts at the team racing finals in Southampton at Easter.

### TABLE TENNIS

Following top of the table Sheffield's comfortable victory over second placed Durham, a win over Hull would guarantee qualification for the finals for Newcastle's men.

Newcastle booked their place in the finals with a hard fought 11-6 victory.

M Mokfi, J Doraiswamy, M Heptinstall and V Bowenkamp will be delighted to have the chance to comptet against the countries finest teams, as many of the top players in England play at BUSA level.

In local league the B team kept up the pressure on division 4 leaders NSYMCA F with a 10-0 win over NSYMCA G.

A Clarke, G Thompson and R Lee made sure the B team still had a chance to win division 4, although they currently lie in second place, and will have to make up the 8 points which they trail NSYMCA F.

### MEN'S TENNIS

Newcastle Men's Tennis team ended a somewhat frustrating season with a 5-1 home defeat against Leeds.

In a match which had no bearing on either side's end of season league position, Leeds fielded a strong team while Newcastle once again suffered from a number of absences.

Simon Powell and Andy Hawke were quickly overcome 8-0 in the top doubles, while Chris Ross and Charles Fong came closer, losing 8-4.

In singles, Ross and Powell, playing at 3 and 4 respectively, both suffered straight sets losses.

Charles Fong, playing at 2 was still struggling to find the match-winning form of last year, but managed to push his opponent to a tie-break in the first, before going down 7-6, 6-2.

Andy Hawke, playing at number 1, continued an impressive run of form to secure Newcastle's only rubber 6-2, 7-6.

Hawke said: "Leeds have good strength in depth and, with our top 2 players missing we knew we would struggle to repeat last term's victory."

"The match didn't have any effect on league placings though, so we were never too worried about the result."

Newcastle finish Third in Division 1 North, and will be hoping for a good run in the Shield competition, with a potential chance of silverware!

### WOMEN'S TENNIS

The final match of the season saw the ladies face second top Leeds Uni.

Number 1 player Vicky Wing for Newcastle demolished her counterpart at Leeds 6-2 6-3, while Captain Jill Markwell swept Hayley Broomhead off the court conceding just 4 games. Unrated Leeds player Annita Kisby was beaten by Newcastle's Vinaya Jigajinni by the same result, and Rachael Hughes didn't have much trouble with Leeds' Rebecca Wint, winning 6-1 6-0.

In the doubles, Leeds were equally lacking and only managed to claim three games in two matches.

The season ends with Newcastle having won 10 out of 10 matches, sitting 15 points clear at the top of Division 1 and will face a play-off with the team propping up the Premier League.

### TEN PIN BOWLING

On February 1, a singles competition in Leeds saw Stuart Howes finished in a very good sixth place, bowling a near perfect 278 game on 1 the way, only 3 strikes from perfection.

All five competitors finished in the top 35, resulting in a very successful tournament. On February 8 a quads tournament in Sheffield saw the team bowling against some of the best bowlers in the country and finishing forth, just outside the prizes, was a very good position considering.

### RUGBY UNION

The Men's 2nds beat Sheffield at home last Wednesday by 32 points, leaving them second in the league.

## MANCHESTER LADIES DESTROYED BY BRUTAL BLUES

### Women's Rugby Union

Newcastle	113
Manchester	0

By HEIDI SWAFFIELD

**FACING A back-log of fixtures to be completed before the BUSA deadline, the women were upset to discover their mid-week, top of the table clash with Loughborough cancelled due to a frozen pitch.**

Their dismay soon turned to anger as they discovered that their pitch at Cochrane Park which was supposedly unfit to play was made available to the men's second team.

The boys had made no secret of their wish to play at Cochrane rather than at Heaton medicals, so there were more than a few murmurings of conspiracy to be heard.

Disturbingly few explanations or apologies were proffered by those in charge.

Casting all the politics aside Newcastle entertained fellow northern premiership comrades Manchester at home, in a double header, this Saturday.

The team cruised to an impressive 113-0 victory in true Blues style.

When Captain Dami Erinle seized the initiative to open the scoring in the very first minute, the girls knew that they were in for an afternoon of fun.

Manchester were a far inferior side in every aspect of their game and Newcastle delighted in exploiting every weakness that they were presented with.

Tries came thick and fast leaving the opponents bruised and on the back foot.

Newcastle are known throughout the country as being a very physical side, and so it was no surprise when an injury came forcing a lengthy weight for an ambulance.

It really was a day for the team's backs, their pace, guile and fancy footwork couldn't fail to impress the small knot of support.

Manchester defence was ripped to shreds time and time again by the decisive nature of the girls' play.

A definite highlight of the day was kicker Jean Halls' consistent form.

The match ended as it was started, with a try right under the posts, epitomising the clinical dispatch of Manchester.

**Next Fixture:** v. Loughborough @ Cochrane Park, 2pm, Monday 17, with the winners becoming Premiership North Champions.



## NEWCASTLE LOSE CLOSE CREWE ENCOUNTER

### Men's Football

Newcastle	1
Crewe and Alsager	2

By CHRIS GREENHALGH

**NEWCASTLE MEN'S Football Firsts went away to Crewe, knowing that they could not progress, but wanting to salvage some pride and prove their ability as a team.**

They were bolstered by the support of the Women's Rugby Union Team, whose game was cancelled.

Newcastle started brightly, forcing Crewe on to the back foot but failing to capitalise from a number of corners.

The home team's frustration showed with a vicious challenge on captain Mickey Rose which resulted in the 'card happy' referee dismissing one of their players.

Unfortunately, a Newcastle player was also drawn into the trouble, and Chris Fitzakerley was also sent off for dissent.

The dismissals opened the game a great deal and Newcastle revelled in the extra space and time.

Olumide Ojo was unfortunate not to break the deadlock on 38 minutes when his stinging drive was parried brilliantly by the Crewe goalkeeper.

Half time came as a welcome relief to the Crewe team.

Newcastle resumed brightly after the interval, forcing early corners after hard work from John Doyle.

Unfortunately Crewe took the lead when a hopeful long ball broke kindly in the box and was poached home, against the run of play.

Newcastle rallied, driving forward through the energetic Rich Myers and John Pearson.

Pearson was unlucky not to score when a midfield burst drew another good save from the Crewe keeper.

The Blues eventually drew level in the 64th minute when a short corner from Chris Morrow was met powerfully by James Minchin, whose header was unstoppable.

Newcastle now sensed victory and poured forward, especially through Myers.

However, when John Doyle was dismissed for a second bookable offence, the tide again turned and a late, long corner, was headed in for Crewe to win.

It was a sad end for Newcastle, especially for the players in their final year, but the team showed enough durability and potential to bounce back next season.



## WELSHMEN DEFEATED IN LEAGUE CLASH

### Rugby League

Newcastle	24
UWIC	4

By PHIL SKILLEN

**NEWCASTLE CONTINUED their renaissance with a resounding win over Welsh rivals UWIC at a muddy and damp Close House.**

The Blues were determined to carry on their recent good form and record their second consecutive win.

The home team started brightly and were making good yardage against the visitors.

As per usual the Newcastle boys didn't do themselves any favours.

They seemed hell bent on trying to play champagne rugby with a slippery ball in their own twenty.

Despite this it was indeed the Blues who opened the scoring with a penalty right underneath the posts.

The game continued in a similar vein for the next ten minutes or so with Newcastle reverting to basic rugby league and building the pressure on the visiting Welshmen.

A further long range penalty extended the lead to 4-0.

This seemed to spark the home side into life and the Newcastle boys scored a beautiful try courtesy of powerful Aussie Lars Madsen.

The extras were added to make it 10-0.

UWIC fought bravely but it was beginning to become hard to stem the Blue

tide from rushing forwards.

Clever play from the scrum saw loose forward Hamilton break and feed halfback Jon Farrell to canter in unopposed to score just right of the uprights.

More accurate kicking from Hamilton made it 16-0.

The game was effectively over as a contest.

Half time came and Coach Powell rung the changes and brought on fresh legs for the second half.

This continued in the same way as the first half, and it wasn't long before lively hooker Harry Gee darted over for an excellent opportunist try.

Rob Spurr missed with the difficult conversion. 20-0.

Unfortunately, the game became scrappy and both sides were guilty of careless play.

However, this did not stop the Newcastle lads scoring again, this time via centre Dave Brocklebank who was on vintage form.

Spurr again missed with what was another difficult touchline conversion, leaving the score at 24-0.

But UWIC didn't give up and managed a consolation try with just minutes remaining on the clock, to make the final score 24-4 to the Uni.

Captain Craig Hamilton said: "It was another great performance."

"However, there are still areas we have to work on to get better and win the remaining three crucial games."

**Next Fixture:** Leeds Met away.

## IS SVEN'S PERSISTENCE WITH MICHAEL AN 'OWEN' GOAL?

By DANIEL BRENNAN

**THE POST-MORTEM into the English embarrassment during last week's 'friendly' may have begun to fade, but an important question remains, "Should Michael Owen be an automatic choice for England?"**

Just over four years ago, following what is arguably still Owen's greatest moment, that goal against Argentina, initiated the belief that he would go on to lead the line for England for the next ten years, his name being one of the first on the team sheet.

However, is that still the case? Does Owen continue to live up to the hype of summer '98?

It is my belief that, whilst a great striker, he is (as Kevin Keegan put it) "just a little short at this level", literally as well as figuratively speaking.

Yes, Owen may still have his pace but he lacks the physical presence and power of Thierry Henry or Ruud van Nistelrooy, both in terms of sheer strength, but also in terms of height.

Therefore to be at all effective, Owen has to play with a target-man, another burly, physical striker to occupy the defence and allow him to find the space his pace can exploit.

Alan Shearer should have been the perfect strike partner for Owen.

It was widely argued, however, that Shearer and Owen could not play together, Shearer was too old and too immobile for international football.

However since his international retirement Shearer has forged a lethal partnership at Newcastle with Craig Bellamy, a player of similar stature and

style of play to Owen.

This partnership has given Shearer a new lease of life, and has even led many to call for his return to the England setup.

It is my belief that the Shearer-Bellamy partnership highlights another flaw in Owen's game, his lack of trickery and imagination on the ball.

Whilst Bellamy has the skill to beat a man with trickery as well as with his raw pace, Owen has only his pace to rely on.

This reliance on pace over skill, combined with his lack of physical presence and power means that Owen's game is one-dimensional, a problem highlighted at international level.

Therefore, in my opinion whilst Owen is still a solid Premiership performer, he should no longer be seen as an automatic choice for England.

Rather than continue to back Owen and attempt to find a partner for him, Sven should instead gamble on a new strike-pair who can bring presence, power and skill as well as simply pace to the England frontline.

Can we find such a pair in English football?

The answer, in my opinion, is an emphatic yes.

With Alan Smith, James Beattie and Ronaldo there are three young English strikers more than capable of offering a much more rounded attack than Owen et al can provide.

**Any feedback?** Then email, [haveyouhadenoughofOwen@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:haveyouhadenoughofOwen@yahoo.co.uk)

## CHAMPION RUGBY TEAM LOUGHBOROUGH BEATEN BY NEWCASTLE

### Men's Rugby Union

Newcastle	30
Loughborough	21

By HARRY SYMS

**Last Wednesday Newcastle 1st XV took to a treacherously slick pitch at Cochrane Park alongside their dreaded opposition, top place Loughborough.**

A discernible tension seemed almost to impede the small crowd's breathing as rumour circulated of the Visitor's five England internationals; this was a fixture it seemed, not against uni sportsmen, but rather rugby deities.

The first few minutes of the match did little to dismiss these rumours as Loughborough stifled any possession that the Blues tried to use and acted themselves with great serenity, displaying an ability to recycle almost interminably.

It was under this withering pressure that Newcastle were to remain for the entire first half, enjoying few breaks from their own territory, and so to trail Loughborough by just 10 points to 15 after half an hour was very much a good effort.

Having scored one further penalty,

the Visitors led 18-10 at the break, and although Newcastle were by no means beaten, their handling thus far had been fairly terrible - whilst the Whites' pack had maintained a ghastly dominance in the tight.

What the Visitors did so well that first half was to dominate the pace at which the game was played.

But, immediately after the second half began, Newcastle were offered hope as they not only enjoyed the rare opportunity to run at Loughborough, but were awarded a penalty within easy range of goal, taking the score to 18-3.

This pressure, however, was predictably not to last, as the Visitors replied with some sustained momentum of their own, running some fabulous angles through a defence that could only tackle manfully, earning a penalty from which they took three points.

Perhaps it was at this moment that Loughborough decided to coast - or perhaps Newcastle had until then been holding something back, for the Blues earned a lineout within their opponent's 22 from which they mauled with their usual ferocity to score a wonderful, vital, but unconverted, try.

Play resumed and it was only minutes later that their centres combined telepathically to score again, this time with the conversion, taking the lead by a score of 25-21.

Domination now lay with the Blues, whose scrum regained their customary



strength, and whose backs seemed to have finally removed the Teflon from their palms.

They had reduced the demi-gods to little more than squabbling, frustrated children who, just before the final whistle, leaked yet another try, as Newcastle now luxuriated in limitless possession.

With the final whistle, the scoreline lay at 30-21, record of a great victory over such a well-drilled, talented and accomplished side.

Coach John Fenn, looking rather drained, joked: "I need a new pacemaker after that!"

"The determination of the team was amazing, and the forwards stuck to their task brilliantly, their lineout work was incredible."

Talismanic scrum-half Gaule was undoubtedly one of Fenn's best players, kicking with divine accuracy, often opening up space and confusing Loughborough's defence.

There were several aspects of Newcastle's performance, however, that were not so praiseworthy, especially in the first half.

However, the pride and sheer guts displayed late in the game far outweighed any of those faults.

Next fixture: Brunel in Uxbridge.



## NETBALLERS PROMOTED

### Netball

Newcastle	44
Durham	39

By CLARA WARDEN

**EXCITEMENT SOARED** as the ladies prepared for the biggest match of the season - in which the winners would win the league to get promoted to the Premiership.

Although Durham took possession from the whistle, it was Newcastle who quickly settled, intercepting the majority of Durham's moves.

Despite this, it was the Toffs who made the first impact on the scoreline, scoring two goals before Newcastle equalised.

Durham's gangly defender, Heath, stretched over Captain Frankie Bramwell, but despite defensive pressure she failed to prevent Bramwell taking the score to 9-5.

Durham's defence slackened considerably under Newcastle's attacking forces and Scott's wildly energetic attacking play caused worry that the Durham goalkeeper would start to intercept.

Bramwell warned that more control was needed in the second half and Foreman's delicate precision contained the discipline needed by the whole team.

The second half brought what the Captain had desired: less unforced errors.

If Durham gained possession, the Uni were frantic in their determination to retrieve it, with Maw epitomising the Blues' drive, playing with derision towards Durham.

Her Durham equivalent, Whyte, attempted to stare Scott down, but in a move typical of Newcastle, Scott was on the ball before she noticed.

Durham were required to mark the Uni closely, but they were too quick, taking the score to 34-25.

The Uni kept the pressure on, however, eight minutes from time the tension hung thick when Durham scored three consecutive goals.

Newcastle answered with style, a beautiful long pass from the wing took Newcastle to their fortieth, and agile play between Maw, Foreman and Bramwell maintained the gap between the teams at 42-34.

Two Uni goals later and the final whistle blew to signal an impressive 44-39 win.

Captain Bramwell said: "I am totally delighted and exhausted, but we're on our way to the Premiership!"

Check out the latest film reviews - p. 11